151 YEARS
1,791 ISSUES
A NEW DESIGN

THINK.AGAIN.

the Atlantic

James Fallows on China's Neurosis

Andrew Sullivan on Why He Blogs

Jeffrey Goldberg on the Idiocy of Airline Security

NOVEMBER 2008 THEATLANTIC.COM

SHOULD WOMEN RULE THE WORLD?

HOW?
WHO?
WHY?

CAN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BE SAVED?

CAN CANADA SAVE AN AMERICAN FOOTBALL TEAM?

SHOULD CHILDREN HAVE SEX CHANGES?

WHO WILL OWN THE ARCTIC AFTER IT MELTS?

WHAT'S @&#%!*$ WRONG WITH SWEARING?

IS MARSEILLE THE FUTURE OF ISLAM?

ARE AMERICAN PARENTS TOO INDULGENT?

WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT BITTERS?

WILL ANTI-MATTER DESTROY THE UNIVERSE?

IS GENDER A MYTH?

CAN YOU AVOID HATING YOURSELF IN THE MORNING?

WHY ARE ATHEISTS SO FUNNY?

IS SCOTLAND A MYTH?

WILL BLOGS KILL WRITING?

WHAT?
WHERE?
WHEN?

WHY CAN'T ANGELINA JOLIE SAVE A NATION IN JAPAN?

WHAT MAKES US HAPPY?

DID THE ISRAELITES HAVE POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER?

WHY ARE MOST MOVIES LOUSY?

CAN YOU TEACH A PIGEON TO RESTRAIN ITSELF?

WHY?

DO TATTOOS MAKE YOU ANTISOCIAL?

WILL GLOBAL WARMING GRANT GREENLAND INDEPENDENCE?

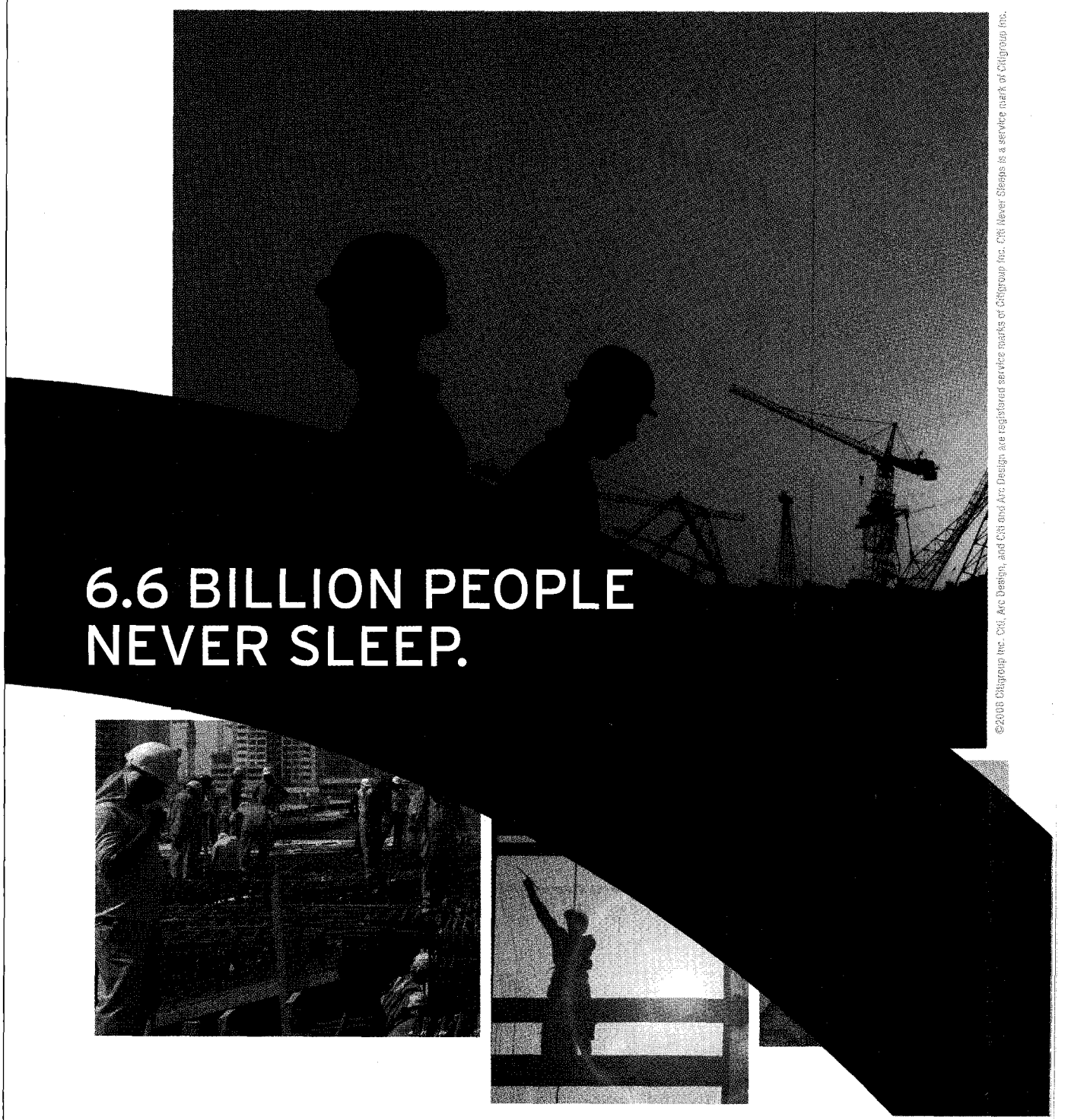
WHY ARE THE CHINESE OBNOXIOUS?

WHY REDESIGN THE ATLANTIC?

IS CREDIT CARD DEBT A GOOD THING?

WHY DOES THE TALIBAN HAVE SUCH GOOD PR?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



©2008 Citigroup Inc. Citi, Arc Design, and Citi and Arc Design are registered service marks of Citigroup Inc. Citi Never Sleeps is a service mark of Citigroup Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dreams. Realities.

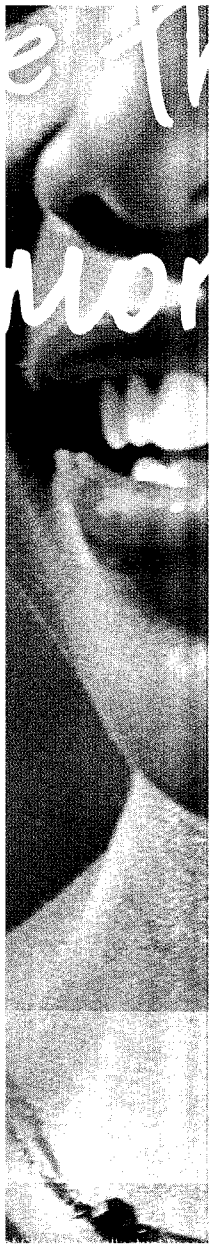
The tower cranes are still. The backhoes are silent. And for a weary group of Guangzhou construction workers, the long work day has finally come to an end. But, in Lyon and Dubai and Delhi, the work continues for several more hours. Meanwhile, in Vancouver and São Paulo, the daily toil has only just begun. The fact is, there are 6.6 billion of us spread out across the planet. And only one financial institution has the vast depth and breadth of resources to keep pace.

At Citi, we work around the world and around the clock, providing our clients with innovative thinking and new opportunities. And we've been doing so since 1902, when our Shanghai office became the first American bank in Asia. Today, we're in over 100 countries, yet our people remain 98% local. It's this unparalleled combination of global experience and local insight that enables our clients to grow and prosper. The world never sleeps. That's why Citi never sleeps. citi.com/neversleeps

Citi never sleeps℠

citi®

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

© 2007 BASF Corporation

While we can't do much about the traffic, we can help clean the air. PremAir® from BASF is the first and only automotive commercial catalyst that destroys ground-level ozone, a key component of smog, and converts it into pure, breathable oxygen. Already installed on over 3 million car radiators, PremAir turns cars into veritable smog-eating machines. It's the kind of sustainable innovation from BASF that leaves everyone breathing easier. Learn more at basf.com/stories

Helping Make Products Better®

BASF
The Chemical Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOVEMBER 2008
VOL. 302 NO. 4

the Atlantic

FEATURES

56...A Boy's Life
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOUR SON WANTED TO BE A GIRL? SOME DOCTORS HAVE A NEW AND TROUBLING ANSWER.
By Hanna Rosin

72...Their Own Worst Enemy
CHINA IS STUNNINGLY BAD AT MANAGING ITS OWN REPUTATION. HERE'S WHY.
By James Fallows

78...The Lightning Rod
MICHELLE RHEE'S PLAN TO REVOLUTIONIZE D.C. SCHOOLS
By Clay Risen

88...Sea Change
THE ARCTIC'S RADICALLY CHANGING GEOGRAPHY
By Scott Borgerson

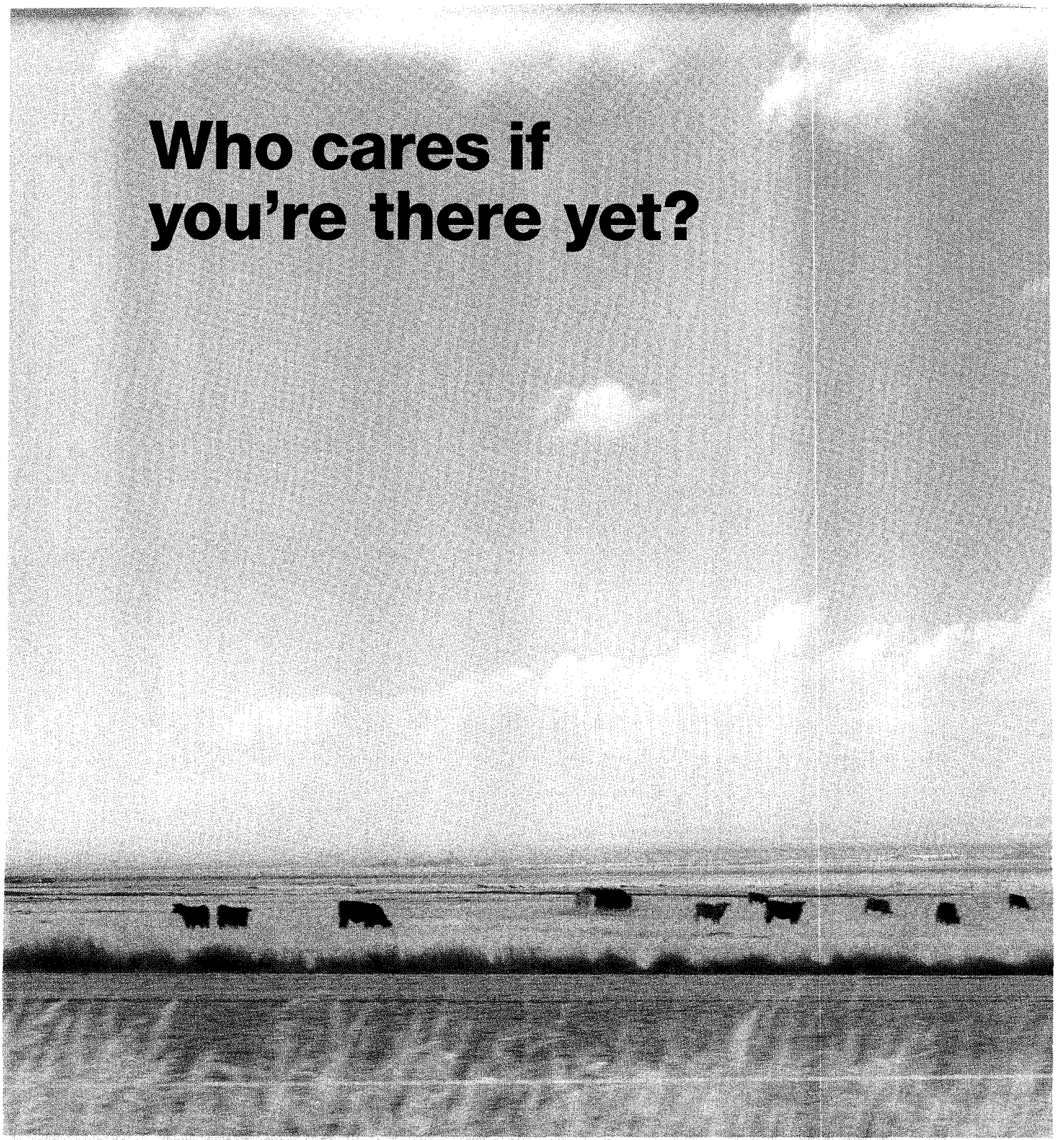
90...First Person Plural
THE NEUROSCIENCE OF IDENTITY
By Paul Bloom

100...The Things He Carried
ADVENTURES IN AIRPORT SECURITY
By Jeffrey Goldberg

106...Why I Blog
THE FEEDBACK IS PERSONAL AND BRUTAL, BUT THE CONNECTION WITH READERS IS INTOXICATING.
By Andrew Sullivan

NATALIE BEHRING/PANOS PICTURES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



With the Tribeca, all the fun is in getting there. An available third row ensures plenty of seating, while the Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive gives you a firm grip on the road. And since it's a 2008 IIHS Top Safety Pick,* you get peace of mind as well. Family and the open road go together better than you thought. **Love. It's what makes a Subaru, a Subaru.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SUBARU

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTENTS

14...EDITOR'S NOTE

16...LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

21...QUICK STUDY
Ghetto tax; Taliban talking points; biblical trauma

GALLERY
50...Lights
By Guy Billout

75...Hummer Ride
By Paul Sahre

77...It's Mutual
By Laurie Rosenwald

87...Red-Meat Nation
By Nigel Holmes

93...Vote Now
By Steve Brodner

109...Fairy Tale
By Istvan Banyai

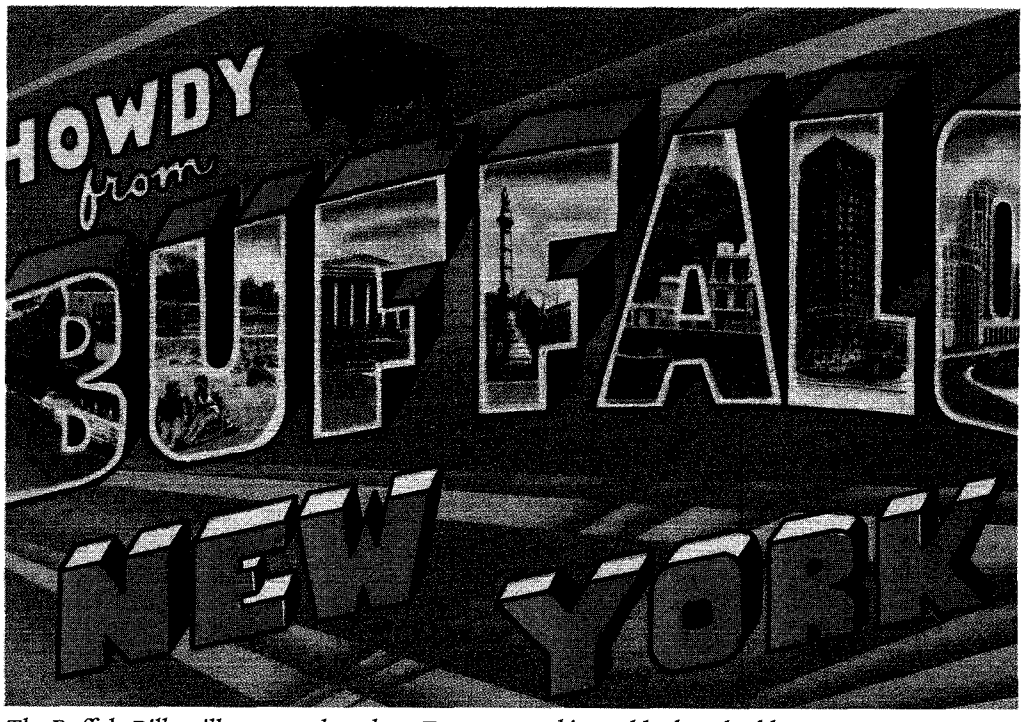
POETRY
84...My Career in Radio
By Garrison Keillor

96...Father Andrews
By Thomas Lynch

142...IN A WORD
Eloquence contretemps; ages of fable
By Barbara Wallraff

144...WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
Avoiding annihilation, and other advice
By Jeffrey Goldberg

Cover design by Pentagram



The Buffalo Bills will soon say howdy to Toronto—and its suddenly valuable currency, page 26.

Dispatches

24...Sunstroked
France's religious strife melts away in Marseille.
By Jeffrey Tayler

26...Buffalo Shuffle
Can Toronto save an NFL team—and its decaying hometown?
By Gregg Easterbrook

28...Freedom's Curse
Why Washington's crusade against swearing on the airwaves is f*cked up
By Steven Pinker

29...All the Right Moves
Will former NBA All-Star Kevin Johnson become the next mayor of Sacramento?
By Joshua Green

30...Turkish Bath
A new dam could submerge one of the world's richest historical sites.
By Christina Davidson

DESIGN
34...A Question of Balance
How do you redesign *The Atlantic*?
By Michael Bierut

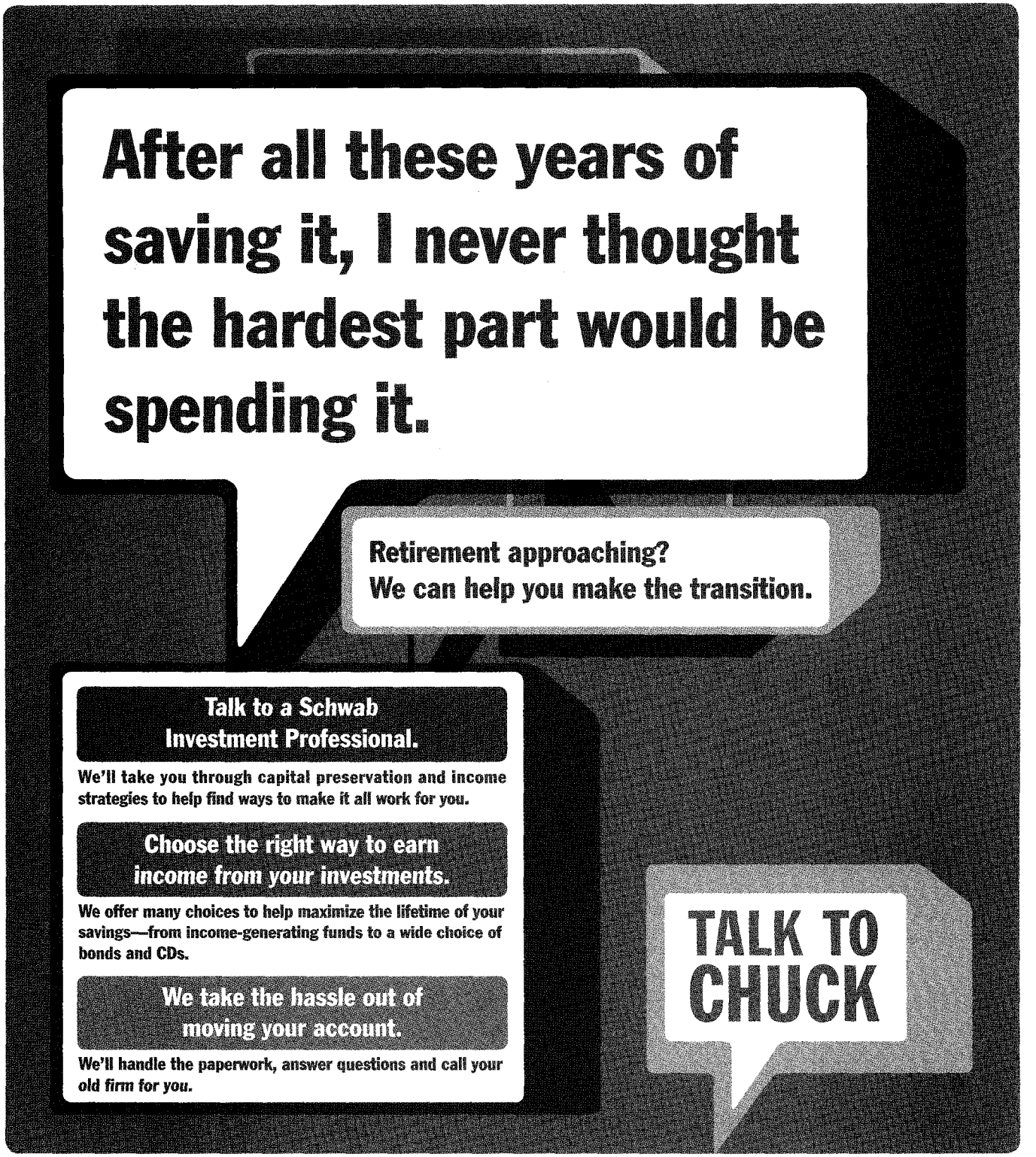
DRINK
38...The Bitter Beginning
Learning to love a bracing Italian liqueur
By Wayne Curtis

TRAVEL
40...The Gangster in My Tub
The author finds himself in hot water at a Japanese *onsen*.
By Charles C. Mann

TECHNOLOGY
42...Self-Reliance 2008
Like your Leatherman? Love your iPhone? Still to come: the ultimate open-source ultragadget.
By Bruce Sterling

LAKE COUNTY MUSEUM/CORBIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Retirement: Don't worry about it, talk about it.
1-800-4SCHWAB/SCHWAB.COM

charles SCHWAB

Investors should consider carefully information contained in the prospectus, including investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses. You can request a prospectus by calling 800-435-4000. Please read the prospectus carefully before investing.

Bond investments are subject to various risks including changes in interest rates, credit quality, market valuations, liquidity, prepayments, and other factors.
Certificates of deposit are offered through Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. CDs from Schwab CD OneSource™ are issued by other FDIC-insured institutions and are subject to change and system access.
There may be costs associated with early redemption and possible market value adjustment.

©2008 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. SIPC Securities in your account protected up to $500,000. For details, please see www.sipc.org.
(0408-4775) ADP41696-00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTENTS

David Thomson's critical quirks—like his mad Nicole Kidman crush—pervade his long-awaited film history, page 115.

Columns

COMMERCE AND CULTURE
44...The Case for Debt
Public anxiety over "excessive" consumer debt has a long, and misguided, history.
By Virginia Postrel

MOVING PICTURES
48...An Atheist Walks Into a Bar ...
Bill Maher's spiritual journey
By James Parker

CONTENT
51...He Saw It Coming
The forgotten filmmaker who anticipated our modern media madness
By Michael Hirschorn

Books

EDITOR'S CHOICE
115...The Reel Thing
An infuriating, idiosyncratic critic can't help but be elegiac in cataloguing the history of movies.
By Benjamin Schwarz

120...Should Women Rule?
A clutch of books suggests they can't rule like men. But there are other ways to run the world.
By Sandra Tsing Loh

132...Torch Song
Remembering the language of lyrics
By Corby Kummer

134...Cruel and Unusual
V. S. Naipaul has produced works of extraordinary skill—and lived a life of equally extraordinary callousness.
By Christopher Hitchens

140...Cover to Cover
Du Maurier gets her due; Julia Glass's latest; the ruins of the railroads; Scottishness debunked; and more

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THEATLANTIC.COM

INTERVIEW
Me, Myself, and I
Psychologist Paul Bloom talks about the many selves that make up our identities—and why they're often in conflict with each other.

SLIDESHOW
Antediluvian
Christina Davidson gives a photo tour of the ancient ruins of Hasankeyf—before they're forever flooded by a new dam.

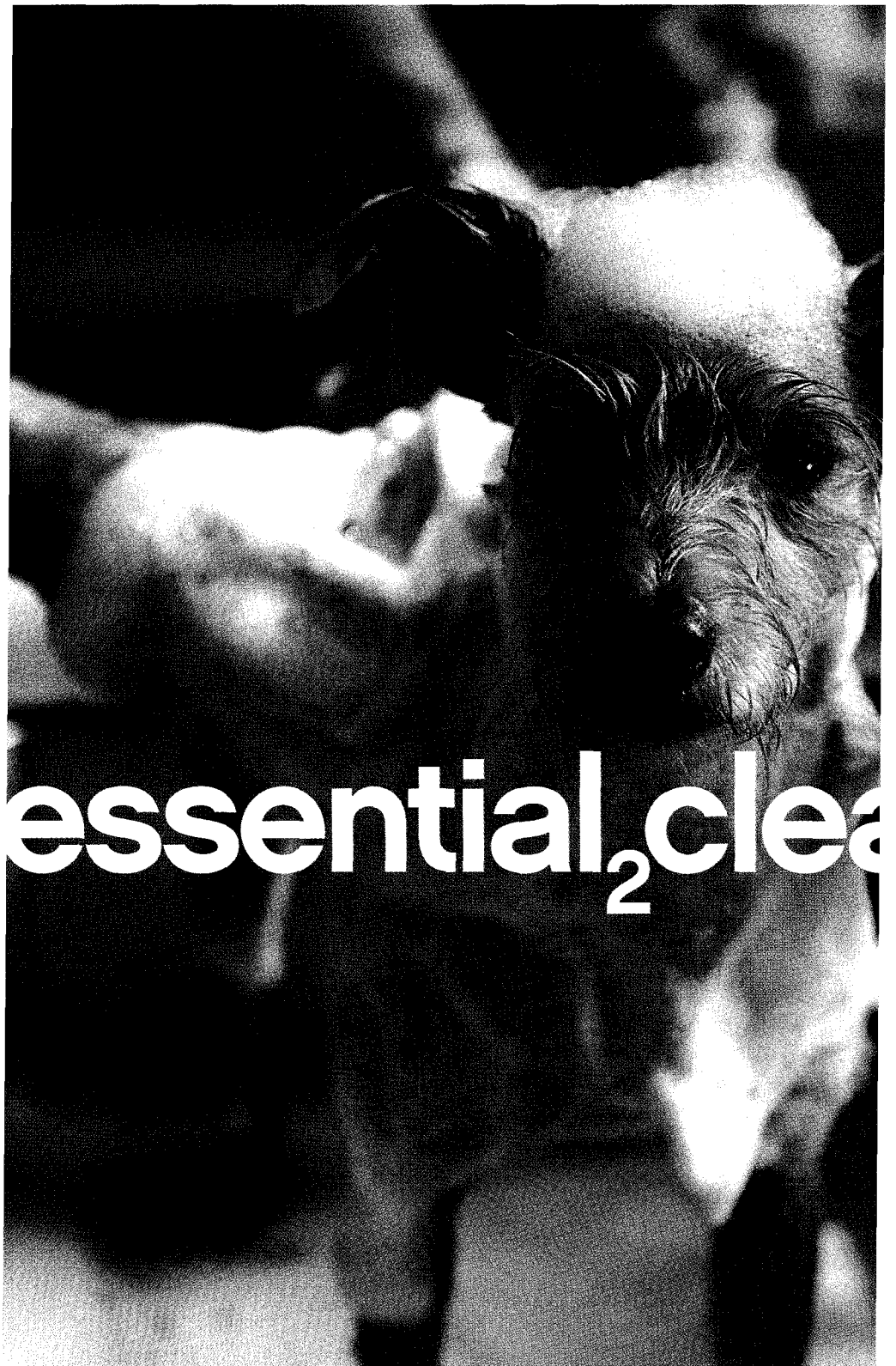
ARCHIVE
Cover Story
Highlights of The Atlantic*'s graphical evolution through the years, featuring some of the magazine's most famous cover artwork*

SLIDESHOW
The Arctic Thaws
Scott Borgerson and Michael Levi narrate photos of the polar bears, Eskimos, and melting ice they saw on a mapping expedition.

VIDEO
Masters of the Blogosphere
Atlantic *bloggers Marc Ambinder and Andrew Sullivan debate their profession's mission, in theory and practice.*

ELLEN VON UNWERTH/20TH CENTURY FOX/THE KOBAL COLLECTION

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

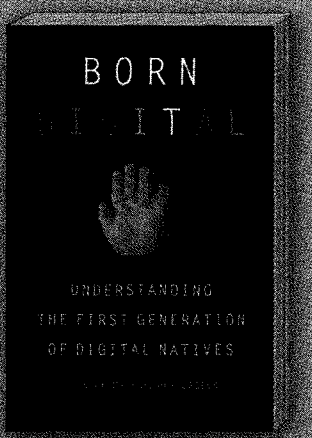


IT HELPS KEEP OUR FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS ODOR-FREE, FLEA-FREE, GERM-FREE AND FANCY-FREE. IT IS AMERICAN CHEMISTRY.

americanchemistry.com
essential

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW



borndigitalbook.com

"*Born Digital* offers an excellent primer on what it means to live digitally. It should be required reading for adults trying to understand the next generation."
—Nicholas Negroponte

"Digital technologies are changing our kids in ways we don't yet understand. This beautifully written book will set the framework for a field that will change that. It is required reading for parents, educators, and anyone who cares about the future."
—Lawrence Lessig

"From now on, any attempt to understand what it is like to grow up or to live one's life in a digital world must begin with this outstanding, original synthesis."
—Howard Gardner

BASIC BOOKS
a member of the Perseus Books Group
PUBLISHERS WEEKLY PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR
www.BasicBooks.com

the Atlantic

David G. Bradley, CHAIRMAN
John Galloway, PRESIDENT, ATLANTIC MEDIA COMPANY

Justin B. Smith, PRESIDENT

EDITOR
James Bennet

DEPUTY EDITOR
Scott Stossel

LITERARY EDITOR & NATIONAL EDITOR
Benjamin Schwarz

DEPUTY MANAGING EDITORS
James Gibney, Don Peck, Maria Streshinsky

SENIOR EDITORS
Jack Beatty, Clive Crook, C. Michael Curtis (Fiction), Ross Douthat, Joshua Green, Corby Kummer, Amy Meeker, Sue Parilla, Yvonne Rolzhausen, Andrew Sullivan, Robert Vare (Editor at Large)

ART DIRECTOR
Jason Treat

NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS
Mark Bowden, James Fallows, Jeffrey Goldberg, Robert D. Kaplan

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Marc Ambinder, Justine Isola, Timothy Lavin, Megan McArdle, Reihan Salam

COPY DESK
Marge duMond, Copy Chief
Janice Cane, Julie Klavens, Copy Editors

RESEARCH & STAFF EDITORS
David Barber (Poetry), Rachael Brown, Matthew Quirk, Eleanor Smith, Graeme Wood

ART STAFF
Melissa Bluey, Assistant Art Director
Katie Mathy, Art & Photography Coordinator
Ryan Morris, Graphics Editor

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Caitlan Smith

ATLANTIC MEDIA FELLOW
Rafael Enrique Valero

EDITORIAL INTERNS
Stephen Bartenstein, Laura Brunts, Theodore Kahn, Daniel Nichanian, Vanessa Nickerson, Sam Pape

CORRESPONDENTS
David Brooks, Stephen Budiansky, Wayne Curtis, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Charles C. Mann, P. J. O'Rourke, James Parker, Jonathan Rauch, Eric Schlosser, Ellen Ruppel Shell, Jeffrey Tayler, Bing West

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Roy Blount Jr., Tom Carson, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Francis Davis, Gregg Easterbrook, Michael Hirschorn, Christopher Hitchens, Wendy Kaminer, Tracy Kidder, Toby Lester, Sandra Tsing Loh, Thomas Mallon, James Alan McPherson, B. R. Myers, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Virginia Postrel, Thomas Powers, Hanna Rosin, William Schneider, Paul Starobin, Chuck Todd, Amy Waldman, Barbara Wallraff, Benjamin Wittes

THEATLANTIC.COM
Sage Stossel, Executive Editor
Jennie Rothenberg Gritz, Senior Editor
Patrick Appel, Research Assistant

EDITOR EMERITUS
William Whitworth

VICE PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER
Jay Lauf

VICE PRESIDENT & PRESIDENT, ATLANTIC LIVE
Elizabeth Baker Keffer

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
Felix DiFilippo

INTEGRATED MARKETING DIRECTOR
Zazie Lucke

DIGITAL AD DIRECTOR
William McGarry

INTEGRATED ADVERTISING SALES
SAN FRANCISCO: *Ryan Grabenkort, West Coast Director, 415-742-4558, rgrabenkort@theatlantic.com*

LOS ANGELES: *Christie Stafford, Senior Integrated Sales Manager, Southern California, 310-475-9493, cstafford@theatlantic.com*

NEW YORK: *Jill Mullan, Integrated Sales Director, 212-284-7657, jmullan@theatlantic.com*

Brooks Aukamp, Integrated Sales Manager, NY & DC, 212-284-7646, baukamp@theatlantic.com

Stephanie Jackson, Integrated Sales Manager, NY & Southeast, 212-284-7649, sjackson@theatlantic.com

CHICAGO: *Jessica Ni, Integrated Sales Manager, 312-593-1515, jni@theatlantic.com*

SOUTHWEST: *Carolyn Wood, Integrated Sales Manager, 702-240-0035, cwood@theatlantic.com*

BOOK PUBLISHING: *Gloria Bruere, 718-499-0699, gbruere@theatlantic.com*

ADVERTISING SUPPORT:
Patrick Hawke, Senior Manager, Operations & Reporting
Leah Carroll, Assistant to the Publisher
Virginia Arrigucci, Adam Kaufman, Associates

DIRECT RESPONSE AND EMPORIUM: *Marie Isabelle, Manager, 800-280-2069, misabelle@theatlantic.com*
Susan Boucher, Associate

INTEGRATED MARKETING
Kristin Cummings, Vidya Murthy, Integrated Marketing Managers
Lindsay Cowan, Integrated Marketing Coordinator

CONSUMER MARKETING
David Bergeman, Consumer Marketing Director
Julie Boser, Consumer Marketing Manager

ATLANTIC LIVE
Stacey Pavesi Debré, Events Director
Erin Bladergroen, Marketing Director
Zander Baron, Megan McGuinn, Lindsey Bahr, Nina Lior

THEATLANTIC.COM
Ben Bradley, Digital Production Manager
Clarissa Rappoport-Hankins, Digital Production Analyst

MEDIA RELATIONS
Katie Cristol, 202-266-7164, kcristol@theatlantic.com

PRODUCTION & CREATIVE SERVICES
John Kefferstan, Production Director
Jennifer Farmer, Production Manager
Shaun Raviv, Production Coordinator
Jennifer Yurina, Creative Services Director
Adrian Constantyn, Christopher Donovan

ATLANTIC MEDIA COMPANY
John Fox Sullivan, GROUP PUBLISHER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Elaine Erchak, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
Jay Brodsky, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
Christopher K. Murphy, GENERAL COUNSEL AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES
Suzanne Clark, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL JOURNAL GROUP
Ronald Brownstein, POLITICAL DIRECTOR

EDITORIAL OFFICES & CORRESPONDENCE *The Atlantic* considers unsolicited manuscripts, fiction or nonfiction, and mail for the Letters column. Correspondence should be sent to: Editorial Department, *The Atlantic,* 600 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037. Letters may also be sent to: letters@theatlantic.com. Manuscripts will not be returned, nor will queries be answered or letters acknowledged, unless they are accompanied by a postage-paid postcard or return envelope of sufficient size. Please do not send manuscripts by e-mail. CUSTOMER SERVICE & REPRINTS Please direct all subscription queries and orders to: 800-234-2411. International callers: 515-246-6952. For expedited customer service, please call between 3:30 and 11:30 p.m. ET, Tuesday through Friday. You may also write to: Atlantic Customer Care, Box 37585, Boone, IA 50037-0585. Reprint requests (100+) should be made to The YGS Group, 717-399-1900. A discount rate and free support materials are available to teachers who use *The Atlantic* in the classroom. Please call 202-266-7017 or visit www.theatlantic.com/teach. ADVERTISING OFFICES *The Atlantic,* 110 East 42nd Street, Suite 1311, New York, NY, 10017. 212-284-7647.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Movies and music brought to life. Simply.

NEW A sudden crack of thunder. The roar of the crowd around you. Much of the thrill you get from watching a movie or game at home often comes from what you hear. The new 3•2•1® *GS* Series III DVD home entertainment system from Bose gives you that exhilarating home theater experience, simply and easily.

With just two visible speakers and a hideaway Acoustimass® module, this complete home theater system delivers much of the performance of a five-speaker system, with the simplicity of fewer speakers and wires.

Advanced Bose® technologies make it possible. Engineered with proprietary TrueSpace® digital processing circuitry, the 3•2•1 *GS* system delivers sound that rivals that of larger, more complicated systems. Your movies will have powerful, detailed sound to complement today's advanced video imagery. And your music will be reproduced with more of the spaciousness and clarity you experience only at a live performance.

As John Budris of *Boston Globe Magazine* reported about the 3•2•1 *GS* Series II system, "the sound performance rivals that of more expensive five satellite units." And now, an HDMI output makes it even easier to connect this system to your HDTV. Plus, it can upconvert DVDs to 1080p.

Try our 3•2•1 system for yourself, risk free. We invite you to judge the sound for yourself – whether for movies, sports, music or video games. Call Bose toll free to experience the 3•2•1 *GS* system in the comfort of your own home, with the full confidence of our 30-day, risk-free guarantee. When you call, ask about making **12 easy payments,** with no interest charges from Bose.* Order today, and you'll also receive free shipping.

The new 3•2•1 *GS* Series III home theater system, only from Bose. The most respected name in sound.

1-877-843-9283, ext. FB101
Bose.com/321

3•2•1® GS Series III DVD home entertainment system

BOSE Better sound through research

*Bose payment plan available on orders of $299-$1500 paid by major credit card. Separate financing offers may be available for select products. See website for details. Down payment is 1/12 the product price plus applicable tax and shipping charges, charged when your order is shipped. Then, your credit card will be billed for 11 equal monthly installments beginning approximately one month from the date your order is shipped, with 0% APR and no interest charges from Bose. Credit card rules and interest may apply. U.S. residents only. Limit one active financing program per customer. ©2008 Bose Corporation. Patent rights issued and/or pending. The distinctive design of the 3•2•1® media console is a registered trademark of Bose Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Financing and free shipping offer not to be combined with other offers or applied to previous purchases, and subject to change without notice. Risk free refers to 30-day trial only and does not include return shipping. Delivery is subject to product availability. Quote reprinted with permission: John Budris, *Boston Globe Magazine*, 2/05. Optional speaker stands shown. C_006267

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR'S NOTE

About the Redesign

NINETY YEARS PASSED between *The Atlantic*'s founding and its first substantial redesign, in 1947, when the editors appalled some subscribers by replacing the table of contents they had usefully run on the cover with an image, a concession to commerce and the quickening metabolism of postwar newsstand browsers. Since then, in a sign of the rising clamor for readers' attention, *The Atlantic* has changed its look six times.

This issue, then, is the eighth thoroughgoing redesign, the eighth effort to harmonize *The Atlantic*'s style with its substance and the timbre of the times. The look is the work of the graphic designer Michael Bierut and his colleagues at the design firm Pentagram, collaborating with *The Atlantic*'s art director, Jason Treat. I've left it to Michael, on page 34, to describe the design. I'll walk you through the magazine's new structure.

We've been guided in this redesign by the belief that in these days—these days of Chinese momentum and American uncertainty, of warming seas and Twittered lives, of handheld miracles, pious killers, oracular genetics, and reborn political passions—a magazine about ideas that matter can be useful to those who want to understand what's happening, and maybe to do something about it. Which is to say, we've been guided by *The Atlantic*'s heritage. Longtime readers will, I hope, quickly find themselves on familiar ground. At the front of the magazine, we have restored the "Dispatches" section. Here, with the goal of delivering provocative, diverse bulletins that range across politics, business, international affairs, sports, and society, we'll collect sketches, postcards, and brief comments by our staff writers and other contributors. Our technology, travel, food, and drink pieces have moved forward from the back of the magazine, because we see them also as dispatches from the world of ideas.

On the heels of "Dispatches," Virginia Postrel's column on business, Commerce and Culture, will now open a new "Columns" section. Michael Hirschorn's column, Content, about the media, will also appear here. And we have added a third column, Moving Pictures, in which James Parker will interpret the messages with which our popular culture is entertaining and instructing us, or not.

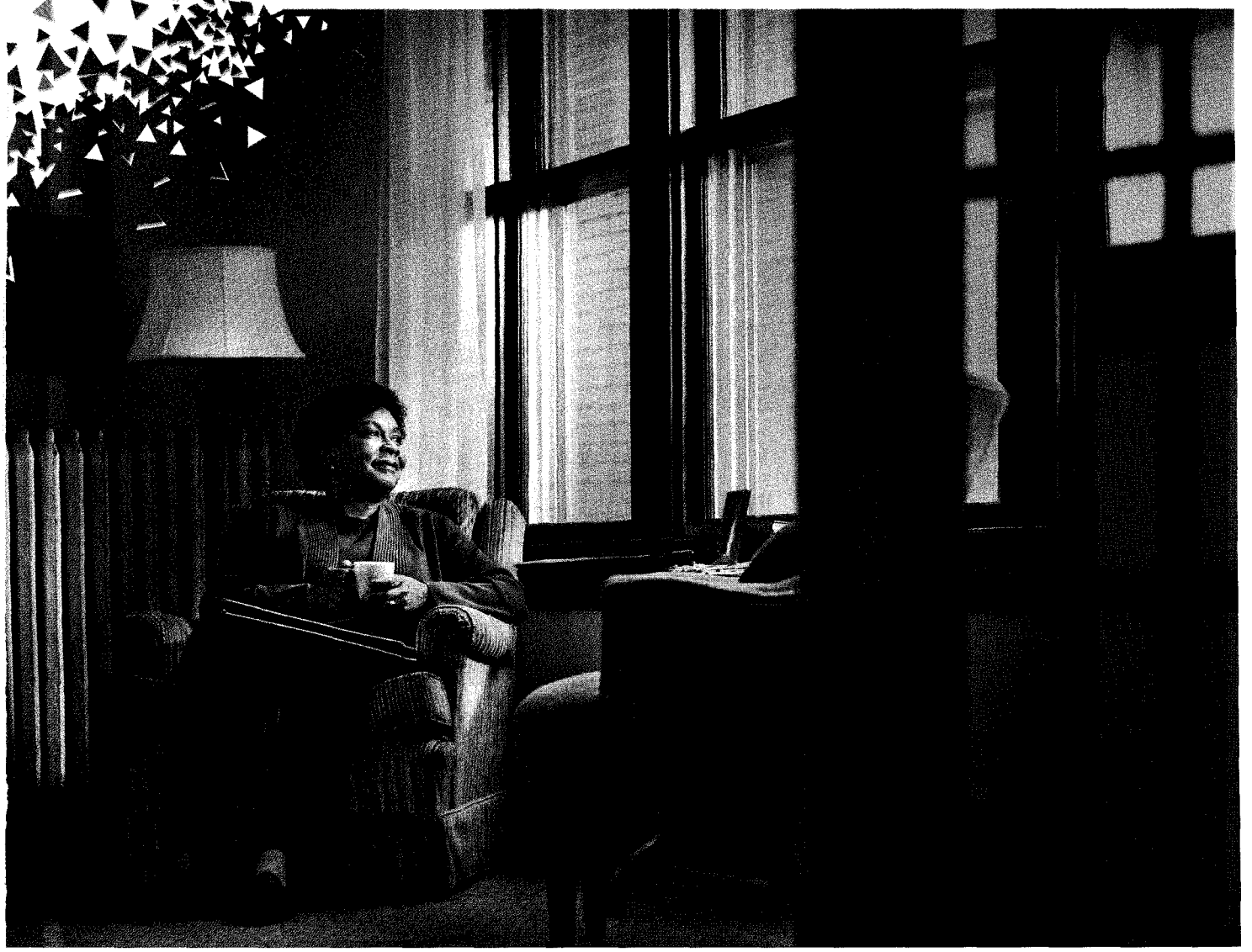
When the creators of *The Atlantic* joined together in 1857, they had a wonderfully incoherent concept for a magazine.

At the back of the magazine, our books coverage, edited by Benjamin Schwarz, will not seem much changed, for good reason. On the last page, we have added a column, What's Your Problem?, by our national correspondent, Jeffrey Goldberg, that I would describe as our first advice column if writers from Oliver Wendell Holmes to Robert D. Kaplan hadn't been informing our readers how to tackle all sorts of problems for the past 151 years. Though Jeff will deal with readers' serious concerns, he will also—forgive us—be out to have some fun. In a similar spirit, we have restored standalone illustration to our pages. Each month, we will be asking artists to advance ideas or arguments with images—some serious, some whimsical—that will be scattered through the magazine.

The core of *The Atlantic* remains its wide-ranging feature stories. This redesign is intended to bring the rest of the magazine more in line with what the features have long been doing. When the writers who created *The Atlantic* joined together in Boston in 1857, they had a wonderfully incoherent concept for a magazine. They wanted to entertain readers on the one hand and, on the other, to advance the radical cause of abolition. The magazine would not press any ideology on its readers—it would be "of no party or clique"—but it would be purposeful, even moral, in promoting what the founders called the American idea. It would set great writers loose to ask big questions, to explore and argue out controversial ideas. And so over time *The Atlantic* would derive its sensibility not from a single editorial voice or theory of how the world works, but from its regard for its readers' intelligence and wit, for their curiosity and their hope that the world might be made a better place. No redesign has changed that essential sensibility. We believe that this one conveys it better.

—James Bennet

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



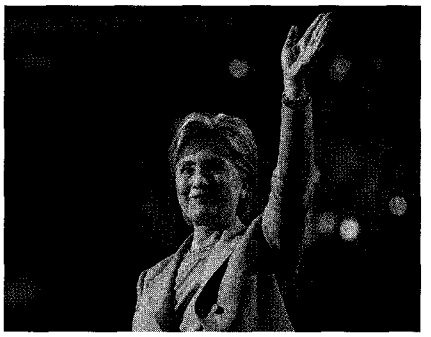
We come together to help warm lives. The people of CITGO give back to the neighborhoods and communities we serve, by donating heating oil during the cold winter months for more than a million people in the U.S. It's just one more way the people of CITGO are there for you at every turn.

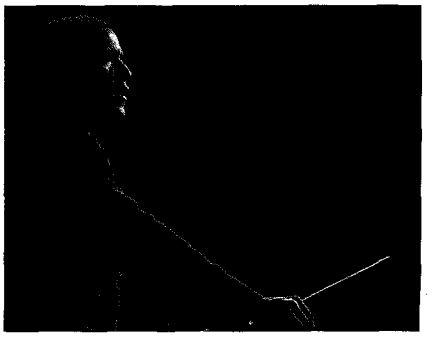
THERE AT EVERY TURN.

CITGO.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR





HUSBAND AND HUSBAND

I always thought that civil unions for homosexuals were the way to go. Marriage was after all an affair between a man and a woman. After reading Andrew Sullivan's heartfelt commentary ("My Big Fat Straight Wedding," September *Atlantic*), I am corrected. Marriage is for two persons, regardless of sexual orientation, who are willing to make a commitment to a long-lasting relationship. It is a joyous event with family and friends as witnesses. No one ought to be denied that joy.

BETSY PLETTE
SAN JOSE, CALIF.

Andrew Sullivan thinks we have made a great leap forward by unraveling from that venerable cultural heirloom known as marriage a single strand—lifelong companionship—and forcing it to stand for the whole. I rather think that we have simply descended with Alice into the nominalist Wonderland where a word "means just what [we] choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

If, analogously, the courts were to decide that from now on we must refer to bats as birds, maybe we would become more kind toward bats, but we wouldn't be any wiser. In time, we might begin to forget the difference. No matter how stupid we would get, however, those brown, furry ones still wouldn't grow feathers.

DOUGLAS TAYLOR-WEISS
AUBURN, N.Y.

In his encouraging commentary Andrew Sullivan, perhaps still in a state of postnuptial euphoria, may have gotten somewhat ahead of the facts in citing "an emergent cultural consensus" in favor of the right to same-sex marriage. While any rational and enlightened person would no doubt agree with the language and rationale of California's May Supreme Court ruling, and could not fail to be stirred by Hannah Arendt's declaration that marriage is an "elemental human right," those sentiments are not shared everywhere. Twenty-five states by my count still have anti-same-sex constitutional amendments on the books. And just two years ago, the Commonwealth of Virginia, home of the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, passed an incredibly draconian constitutional ban on same-sex marriage and civil unions. One wonders how long before Mr. Sullivan's cultural consensus will emerge in those states, and how much longer than that before their medieval constitutional restrictions on marriage are reversed.

ROBERT ANTHONY
RICHMOND, VA.

Log

MOST-RESPONDED-TO ARTICLES IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE

1. **"My Big Fat Straight Wedding"**
   By Andrew Sullivan
2. **"Rhetorical Questions"**
   By James Fallows
3. **"The Front-Runner's Fall"**
   By Joshua Green
4. **"Reconcilable Differences"**
   By Ronald Brownstein
5. **"Gut Reactions"**
   By Lisa Margonelli

PAPER TRAIL

Joshua Green's article ("The Front-Runner's Fall," September *Atlantic*) is the most comprehensive compilation of facts surrounding Hillary Clinton's demise in her race as "the inevitable" candidate that I have read to date.

What continues to confound me is that we, the public, are still even interested in reading and talking about her and her failed campaign. That, coupled with recent TV and radio coverage of her prominent position at the convention, is the political conundrum of the century for me.

CHARLENE E. LEE
TEMPLE, TEXAS

STANDING ORATIONS

James Fallows ("Rhetorical Questions," September *Atlantic*) notes that Barack Obama displayed great skill and confidence in his debate back-and-forths with Alan Keyes during the 2004 U.S. Senate race in Illinois. Fallows appears puzzled as to why Obama did not step up to the same level in his debates with Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination: "What had changed since 2004?"

Mr. Fallows displays some rhetorical skill of his own by immediately asking another question: "Was it that Keyes, for all his virtuosity, was never a serious contender, so Obama had nothing to lose?" He then offers many other hypotheses, concluding, "We can't be sure." Yet "nothing to lose," the most obvious answer, is the correct one. Obama knew that the Illinois electorate saw Keyes as the carpetbagger he was. Polls throughout the election showed Obama with an enormous lead. He wound up winning 70 percent of the vote. The foregone conclusion of the blowout allowed Obama to be, as Fallows says, "a relaxed, funny politician unafraid to go jab for jab." Obama's race against Clinton a few years later, an uphill battle, did not give him the same liberty.

Fallows asserts, "For Obama the key is: look at John McCain, and see

FROM LEFT: SHAWN THEW/EPA/CORBIS; DAVID McNEW/GETTY IMAGES; BROOKS KRAFT/CORBIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

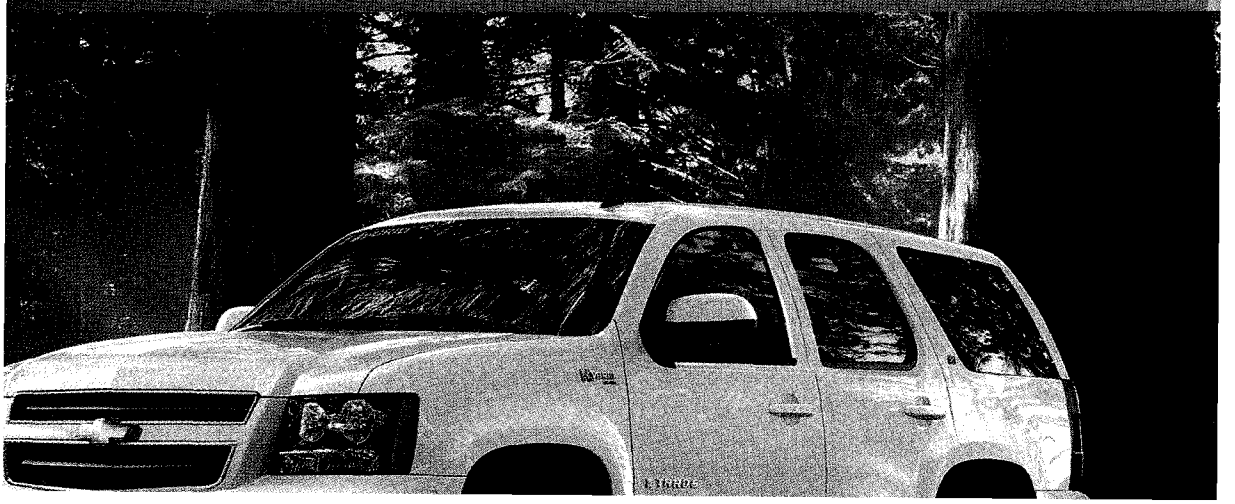
ybrid technology to places it's never been.
Tahoe Hybrid – The Green Car of the Year.

the Green Car of the Year* isn't a car at all. *Green Car Journal*'s Green Car of the Year is the 2008
e® Hybrid – America's first full-size hybrid SUV† (at participating dealers only). This stunning
ent came at the Los Angeles Auto Show. The award is given to new or significantly revamped
uel-powered vehicles.

lestone in many respects," said *Green Car Journal* editor Ron Cogan when commenting on the
ple don't think 'green' when SUVs are concerned."

hevy Tahoe is available with better fuel economy than any of its competitors.** And with its
ybrid technology, the Tahoe Hybrid is competitive with much smaller vehicles. While driving in the
Hybrid achieves the same fuel economy as a standard four-cylinder Toyota Camry.†† Its impressive
ny can be attributed to Tahoe's Hybrid Propulsion Electric System that operates in three ways:
ver, engine power, or any combination of electric and engine power. That's more than just
ar of the Year – that's one smart hybrid. For more information about fuel solutions that go from
to gas-free, go to chevy.com/FuelSolutions

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alan Keyes." However, Obama himself would probably point out to Fallows that the circumstances of a race dictate the rhetorical tactics. A nail-biter demands caution and deliberation; a cakewalk allows a candidate to relax and let fly a few zingers.

Obama will not "look at John McCain and see Alan Keyes," because his race with McCain is very tight. The caution and circumspection that served him so well with Hillary Clinton will again be his play of the day—and should be. At the debates, Obama and McCain both have more to lose by making mistakes than they have to gain by displaying wit. As Fallows notes, people usually remember the gaffes more than the bons mots.

JOHN ERDOS
HARRISONBURG, VA.

James Fallows's excellent article on presidential debates ends on a perfect note: "For better and worse, if Obama wins, a thinking president is what we'll have." Whether that's what the American electorate wants, of course, is another matter.

As someone who remembers the Cuban missile crisis only too well, I found Fallows's final thought reassuring, in sharp contrast to what might have happened to the world in October 1962 had, say, Bush-Cheney been calling the shots.

Ironically, it also brought to mind a lighthearted experience that one of Obama's fellow Illinoisans, Adlai Stevenson, had when seeking the White House. While Stevenson—who, as UN ambassador under JFK, would play a crucial role in defusing the missile crisis—was on the stump, a woman stood up and declared, "All thinking people should vote for Governor Stevenson!" To which the ever-witty candidate dryly replied, "Thank you, madam, but I would prefer to have the majority vote for me."

Stevenson, as it turned out, was buried by not one Eisenhower landslide, but two. Which, if nothing else, makes you think.

GENE KRZYZYNSKI
TONAWANDA, N.Y.

NEUROSKEPTICS

Jeffrey Goldberg ("My Amygdala, My Self," July/August *Atlantic*) explains how, in an fMRI study, his brain responded to images of politicians, celebrities, his wife and his boss, the polemical and the highly arousing. His researchers, however, oversimplified the interpretation of his brain scan by inferring backward, from brain activation to psychological state. There is no evidence to suggest that the brain respects our notions of discrete emotional states.

I always thought that civil unions for homosexuals were the way to go. After reading Sullivan's heartfelt commentary, I am corrected.

Goldberg's researchers, who have been working together for years, include Marco Iacoboni of UCLA and several people affiliated with FKF Applied Research, a neuromarketing firm. Last November, the *New York Times* op-ed page published the results of a study—uncannily similar to Goldberg's—done by the same researchers. The participants, swing voters, underwent brain scans while viewing photos or videos of presidential candidates. Three days after its publication, 17 cognitive neuroscientists responded in *The Times*, decrying the study's method of inferring particular mental states from the activation of particular brain regions.

MATTHEW BOWERS
ALLSTON, MASS.

The popular 19th-century science of phrenology promised to uncover our actual inclinations and predispositions by examining the bumps and ridges of the skull. In 1848, *The London Medical Gazette* published an account of leading phrenologist Franz Joseph Gall's visit to the Salpêtrière mental hospital, in Paris. Initially, Salpêtrière psychiatrist Jean-Étienne Esquirol "recounted to Gall the histories of the different lunatics ... and Gall explained, by a reference to the conformation of the head, the cause of the malady of each." Then, "Esquirol requested Gall to observe the conformation first, and afterwards to tell him the character of the malady. Before this test Gall, of course, was struck dumb." A student wryly observed at the time: "With complete certitude, he was able to step up from the effect to the cause, but in no instance could he descend from the cause to the effect."

Jeffrey Goldberg seeks to investigate his own "actual inclinations and predispositions" using the latest instrument of the day, fMRI. The scientists Goldberg enlists are puzzled when they discover that a photo of Ahmadinejad elicits activity in the ventral striatum, a structure in the brain that is believed to process pleasure and reward. In reaction to this surprising result, his examiners bend their theories to accommodate the incongruity, attributing to Mr. Goldberg a mental life he didn't know he had. Before Esquirol required Gall to make predictions, the phrenologist was free to concoct any explanation to fit the situation. Similarly, the experts quoted in Goldberg's article engage in ad hoc storytelling. This is a dangerously misleading form of analysis since it renders a theory untestable, pushing it outside the realm of science. Just like Gall's phrenology.

CARL SCHOONOVER AND GREG WAYNE
Ph.D. CANDIDATES
IN NEUROBIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK, N.Y.

CORRECTIONS

Beirut was bombed in 1983, not 1993 as indicated on page 51 of the October Atlantic. *Also, although Darwin's theory of evolution was first read at a meeting of the Linnean Society, this did not occur in the room pictured on page 123 of the September* Atlantic, *as the photo caption indicated. We regret the errors.*

To submit a letter to the editor, please e-mail us at letters@theatlantic.com. Include your full name, city, and state.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ADVERTISEMENT

Does the free market corrode moral character?

Yes, but...

other systems are worse. The free market is a crucible of competition that can bring out the basest in human nature. Competition is fierce, and when survival is at stake, there is no room for morality. But, to paraphrase Churchill, for all

its flaws, the free market is still superior to all the other economic arrangements that have been tried.

At first it seems obvious that a system based entirely on self-interest would lead to the moral decay of the individual. If you pause momentarily to aid your brother during your struggle to reach the top—to beat your competitors, to maximize earnings, to buy a bigger house—you will be surpassed by those without such qualms. How, in a truly free market, can there exist consideration for the good of one's fellow man?...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Former world chess champion Garry Kasparov is a leader of the pro-democracy coalition The Other Russia. He is the author of a book on decision-making, How Life Imitates Chess, *and speaks to business audiences worldwide. He lives in Moscow.*

We'd rather not know.

Most of us are consumers who try to get the best possible deals in the market. Most of us are also moral beings who try to do the right things in our communities and societies. Unfortunately, our market desires often conflict with our moral commitments. So how do we cope with this conflict? All too often, we avoid it. We would rather the decisions we make as consumers not reflect upon our moral characters. That way we don't have to make uncomfortable choices between the products and services we want and the ideals to which we aspire.

For example, when the products we want can be made most cheaply overseas, the best deals we can get in the marketplace may come at the expense of our own neighbors' jobs and wages. Great deals also frequently come at the expense of our Main Streets—the hubs of our communities—because we can

get lower prices at big-box retailers on the outskirts of town. As moral actors, we care about the well-being of our neighbors and our communities. But as consumers we eagerly seek deals that may undermine the living standards of our neighbors and the neighborliness of our communities. How do we cope with this conflict? Usually by ignoring it...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Robert B. Reich is professor of public policy at the University of California at Berkeley. He has published twelve books on public policy and has served in three national administrations, most recently as secretary of labor under President Bill Clinton.

No.

In fact, markets require moral character if they are to be truly free, and truly free markets, in turn, promote moral character. But free markets are no guarantor of moral character. As today's cultural environment shows, the free market tends to heighten certain moral risks.

As a politician, I might seem less qualified to answer this question than an economist. But as a politician, I have learned a great deal in the many years I've spent discussing freedom, morality,

and economics with thousands of Americans. These experiences have taught me that the most important word in "free market" is "free"—that a free market is more of a political and moral reality than an economic one...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Rick Santorum, a U.S. senator from Pennsylvania from 1995 to 2007 and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1991 to 1995, contributes a twice-monthly column to the Philadelphia Inquirer *and is a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.*

It depends.

Free markets corrode some aspects of character while enhancing others. Whether the result is good, on balance, depends on how one envisions a good life. Much also depends on whether one believes other economic systems can do better. The question can only be answered by comparing realistic alternatives and by understanding how different systems promote divergent types of human character.

It is important to avoid thinking in terms of ideal models. In recent years there has been a tendency to think that free markets emerge spontaneously when state interference in the economy is removed. But free markets are not simply the absence of government. Markets depend on systems of law to decide what can be traded as a commodity and what cannot. Slavery is forbidden in modern market economies; so are blackmail and child pornography. Free markets *always* involve some moral constraints of this sort, which are policed by governments...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

John Gray is emeritus professor at the London School of Economics. Among his recent books are False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism *(Granta) and* Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia *(Penguin).*

Yes, too often.

Critics rightfully grasp that the free market undermines the traditional, local arrangements that people depend on to teach and sustain morality. Consider especially the experience of children. They first learn morality from their families, with whom

they are most emotionally bonded. Love attaches children to moral conventions and arouses essential moral emotions like sympathy and guilt. In a preindustrial society, these moral habits are further reinforced by the tribe or the village, as well as by religious institutions and folk tales. The developing child is surrounded by a kind of conspiracy of moral teachers, demonstrating lessons of character by word and (less reliably) by deed...

CONTINUED ONLINE.

Kay S. Hymowitz is the William E. Simon senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and a contributing editor at City Journal. *Her most recent book is* Marriage and Caste in America: Separate and Unequal Families in a Post-Marital Age.

To read these essays in their entirety, or to receive a printed version, visit www.templeton.org/market

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION

SUPPORTING SCIENCE~INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

THIS IS THE FOURTH IN A SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS AMONG LEADING SCIENTISTS, SCHOLARS, AND PUBLIC FIGURES ABOUT THE "BIG QUESTIONS." TO JOIN THE CONVERSATION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.TEMPLETON.ORG/MARKET.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STEP INSIDE THE WORLD
OF THE WINDSORS.

MONARCHY

THE ROYAL FAMILY AT WORK

PREMIERES WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 12 8PM ET/PT

Be more PBS

PBS.ORG/MONARCHY

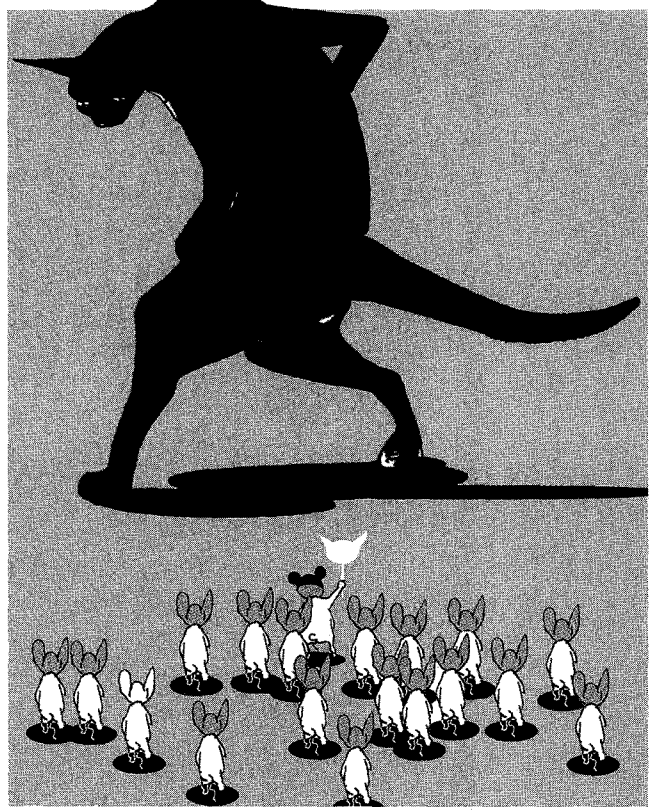
FUNDING PROVIDED BY:
CUNARD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ACADEMY
Google Scholar
As academic journals have gone online, their audiences have grown and their content has become more accessible. But scientists and scholars now cite far fewer journals, reference recent articles much more often, and tend to ignore older studies in their research. While they can now find "prevailing opinion" more easily, they might be exploring a more limited range of ideas and accelerating consensus.
—*"Electronic Publication and the Narrowing of Science and Scholarship,"* Science

PSYCHOLOGY
After the Crash
Why do so many people die in the immediate aftermath of plane crashes and other disasters, even when they've avoided injury? One clue: Royal Air Force crews did poorly on a battery of memory and cognition tests during a simulated crash, suggesting that the mind's ability to focus deteriorates in survival situations, when sound decision-making is essential.
—*"Impairment in Attentional Processing in a Field Survival Environment,"* Applied Cognitive Psychology

GOVERNMENT
Jackboot Junkies
People living under the yoke of corrupt governments tend to want ... more government regulation. It's a vicious cycle: in trusting societies, people act civilly and expect less government interference. In distrustful societies, people act selfishly and expect tighter regulation. But more government corruption leads to less-trusting societies, and citizens will generally "prefer state control to unbridled production by uncivil firms"—even when they know their leaders are crooked.
—*"Regulation and Distrust,"* National Bureau of Economic Research

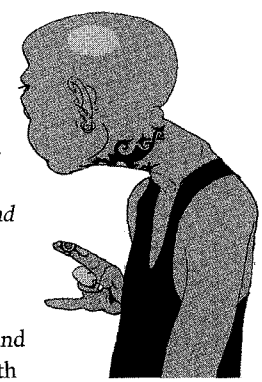


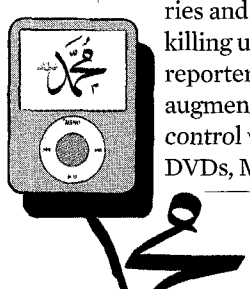
TERRORISM
Guerrilla Marketing
Overwhelmed militarily, the Taliban have mastered the modern art of spin, using asymmetrical warfare to project false strength, then controlling the resulting media narrative by responding quickly to press inquiries and threatening or killing unsympathetic reporters. The group augments its message control with a flood of DVDs, MP3s, and multilingual online propaganda that wildly exaggerates the Afghan government's incompetence and the coalition's brutality.
—*"Taliban Propaganda: Winning the War of Words?,"* International Crisis Group

ECONOMICS
Rich Man's Discount
Poor inner-city residents have access to more locally owned stores than do inhabitants of wealthier big-box suburbs, but they have to pay more for the same groceries as a result. Prices at the independent corner stores that dot city streets run about 7 percent higher than those at chain supermarkets—effectively levying a "ghetto tax."
—*"Cost of Being Poor: Retail Price and Consumer Price Search Differences Across Inner-City and Suburban Neighborhoods,"* Journal of Consumer Research

RELIGION
Odyssey of the Mind
Biblical evidence suggests that after suffering through years of slavery in Egypt and exodus into the desert, the Israelites began to manifest classic symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as disregarding traditional rituals and being haunted by anguishing memories. But creating a narrative of transgression followed by divine punishment seems to have helped ease the pain and restore a sense of control—and make the Jews more resilient in the long run.
—*"Collective Trauma and Post-Traumatic Symptoms in the Biblical Narrative of Ancient Israel,"* Mental Health, Religion & Culture

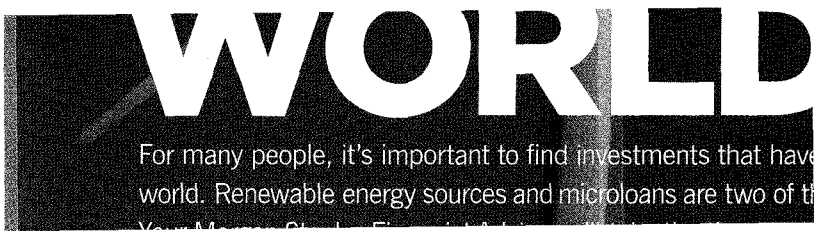
CULTURE
Ink-Stained Wretches
Among three dozen men undergoing court-ordered psychiatric evaluation, those with tattoos were far more likely to have antisocial personality disorder than their unmarked peers, and those with the disorder had tattoos that were larger and more numerous. Tattooed subjects were also more likely to report past sexual abuse, substance abuse, and suicide attempts. Ink may be one way of expressing emotions for a group that otherwise struggles to show them.
—*"Tattoos and Antisocial Personality Disorder,"* Personality and Mental Health





ISTVAN BANYAI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DISPATCHES

CIVILIZATION *Jeffrey Tayler on Marseille's peaceful mix of Speedos, skullcaps, and drug-running mafiosi*
SPORT *Gregg Easterbrook on the magical realism of the Buffalo Bills fan*
LANGUAGE *Steven Pinker questions the grammatical logic of the government's anti-profanity crusade.*
CAMPAIGNS *Joshua Green follows Kevin Johnson's run for mayor, and learns about animal sacrifice.*
PUBLIC WORKS *Christina Davidson warns that Turkey may flood a 10,000-year-old town on the Tigris.*
DESIGN *Michael Bierut explains* The Atlantic*'s new look.*
DRINK *Wayne Curtis on a liqueur that goes down like poison—exquisite, hangover-curing poison*
TRAVEL *Charles C. Mann tries not to offend anyone in a Japanese hot-spring bath.*
TECHNOLOGY *Bruce Sterling on the self-replicating Emersonian metamachines of tomorrow*

MICHAEL RUBENSTEIN/REDUX

There's only one thing the Japanese fear more than guys like this, says Charles C. Mann: foreigners in their public baths.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Muslims, Christians, and nonbelievers in France's second-largest city, the secret to harmony may be the sun and the sea.

CIVILIZATION

Sunstroked

WHY FRANCE'S RELIGIOUS STRIFE MELTS AWAY IN MARSEILLE

By Jeffrey Tayler

IT'S EVENING, BUT the sun still blazes over the boulevard's trash-speckled tarmac, rendering faintly incandescent the humid haze lingering from a hot summer day. Down La Canebière I stroll, heading for the glinting, faraway turquoise eyespot of the Old Port, following women dressed in ankle-length raincoats and Islamic head scarves, long-faced men in frayed djellabas and knit skullcaps, gangly youths with scruffy beards. Teens cluster at kebab stands, which dominate the thoroughfare's culinary scene. On side streets crammed with fleabag hotels and sellers of cheap garments, swarthy boys kick around soccer balls, shouting in Arabic. I could be in Morocco, but in fact I'm in Marseille.

To reach the Old Port, I could also have taken Rue St. Ferréol, an upscale lane running perpendicular to La Canebière that is just as lively but sports the immaculate, AC-cooled, glassed-in preserves of Le Jasmin watch sellers with their outdoor Rolex clock, Galeries Lafayette, Yves Rocher, and BNP Paribas. No one sort of neighborhood typifies Marseille. Nor, as I see when I reach the port, is there a "typical" Marseillais. Along the promenade, next to modest leisure craft floating on motionless waters, the crowd turns more mixed. Young women in tight jeans and blouses, their heavy black tresses falling freely over their shoulders, lead their Islamically scarved mothers past pale tourists in sandals and shorts, crossing paths with youths in skimpy bathing suits and dark shades. Speedos would not be sidewalk attire in any Arab country I know of, but this, after all, is Europe. A 37-foot gilded statue of the Virgin Mary rises atop the city's highest hill, and the forts of Saint Nicholas and Saint Jean guard the Old Port's seaside entrance.

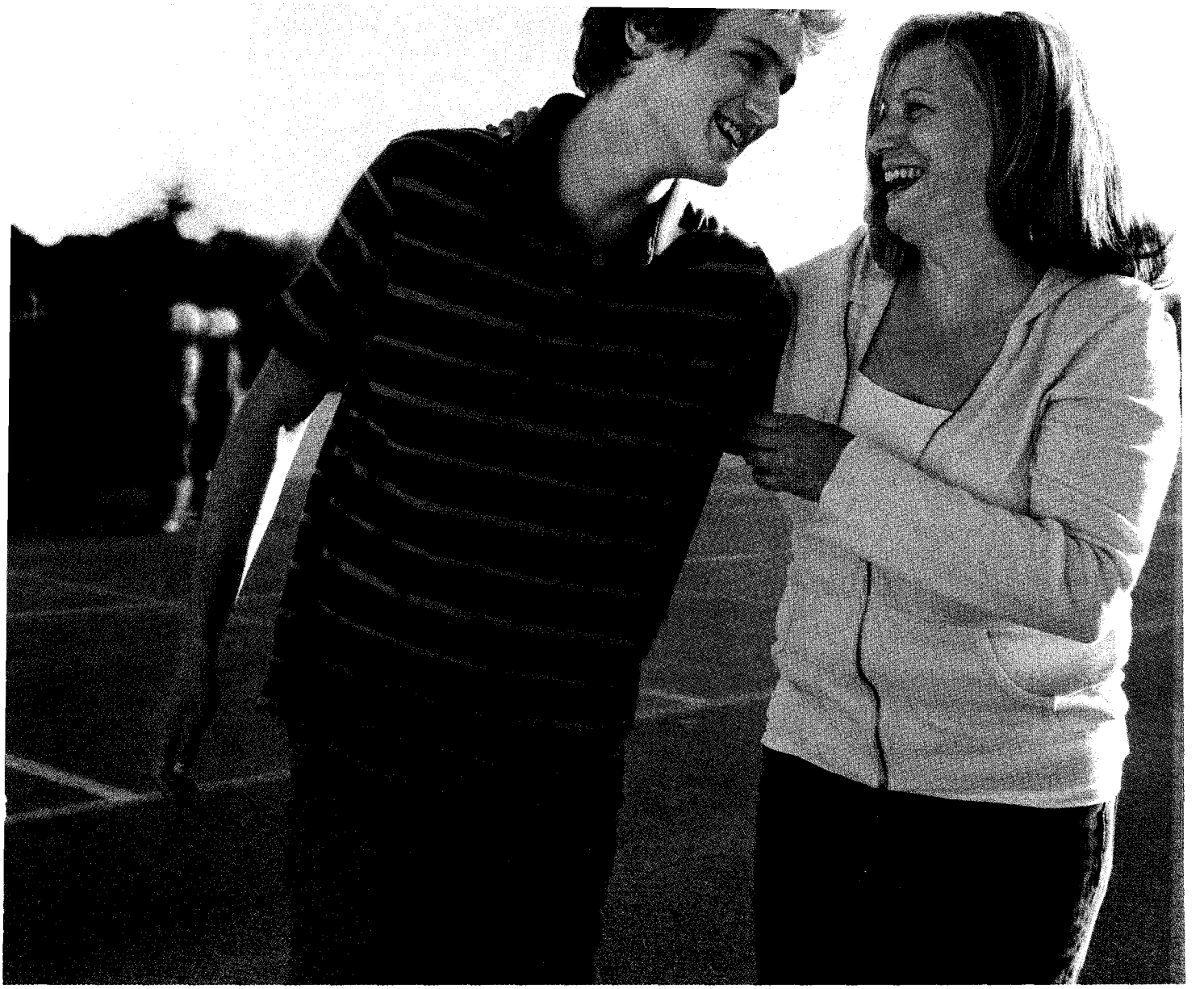
Marseille is France's second-largest city, with 826,700 people, of whom one-fifth to one-quarter are Muslims, mostly of North African descent and mostly poor. They do the kinds of jobs the European French won't touch these days. One might have expected Marseille to endure riots like those that shook France's urban areas for three weeks in November 2005 (and a year later, on their anniversary), after the deaths of two teenagers who clashed with police in Clichy-sous-Bois, an impoverished immigrant *banlieue* of northeastern Paris. Yet Marseille has remained largely calm, even in the drug-plagued, predominantly Muslim slums known as the quartiers Nord, which cover about a third of its territory and nearly abut the Old Port.

Why?

I put the question to my friend Julie Borde, a 23-year-old photography student with French and Algerian parents. (Her mother, née Benhalilou, was born on the Mediterranean's southern shore.) We sit on the terrace of the Buffalo Grill, on Cours d'Estienne d'Orves, just off the port, with a well-stirred mix of diners.

PHILIPPE RENAULT/HEMIS/CORBIS

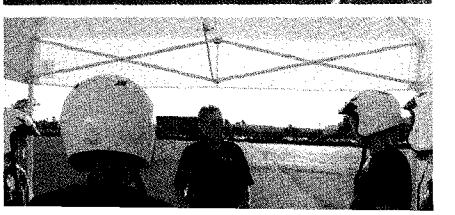
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



CAN THE MOST IMPORTANT SAFETY FEATURE IN A CAR BE A TEEN DRIVER?

WHY NOT?

Sometimes the most unexpected questions spark the most inspired ideas. This one led to the belief that before teens get behind the wheel, they need to learn defensive driving skills. Toyota's Driving Expectations Program trains teens and their parents to anticipate potential hazards and helps them avoid accidents. It also encourages both parties to sign a safe driving contract. Since its launch, thousands have already completed the program. Because, in the end, even the best-made vehicles are only as safe as their



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"There are several theories," Julie says. "One is, up in Paris you have gray skies, concrete, and a culture and all kinds of stores definitely not for the poor, but here in Marseille, you have the sea, the sun, and the mountains. Anyone can enjoy these things, whether they're rich or poor. It's just not depressing here like it is up north. The atmosphere in Marseille is light."

What at first seems like a facile answer to a complex question turns out to have the ring of truth. The blending of cultures here has produced a métis attitude and panache all its own, free and easy and almost un-French, if chicly brazen in an *à la française*, 'hood sort of way. A few years ago, a popular musical, *Les Enfants du Soleil*, celebrated the city's eclectically tolerant ethos. Bars and cafés fill with mixed Marseillais couples, and Arabic slang peppers their speech. The younger ones especially tend to speak French with an animated, Afro-Arab accent entirely different from the traditional southern twang that so grates on the northern ear. Julie embodies the more Western aspects of the mélange, wearing skirts and tops that accentuate her curves, keeping her shoulder-length russet hair loose, marching down Marseille's sidewalks with the confidence of one at ease both in the quartiers Nord and on Rue St. Ferréol.

A less optimistic theory holds that the quartiers Nord stay calm because the local drug-running mafia would punish youths who threatened the peace and order on which it thrives. Riots would be bad for business. Julie doesn't discount this. "French kids, even girls, go into the quartiers to buy shit"—slang for hashish—"and the dealers need to protect them. They'd deal really harshly with any thug who robbed a customer."

Possibly the Marseillais have simply had enough time to adapt to a more varied demography. So close to Italy, with Africa and the Middle East just across the sea, Marseille has long been France's most "foreign" city. In 1884, Guy de Maupassant wrote that Marseille

> perspires in the sun like a beautiful girl who doesn't take good care of herself ... it smells of the innumerable foods nibbled on by the Negroes, Turks, Greeks, Italians, Maltese, Spaniards, English, Corsicans, and Marseillais, too.

Whatever the cause, Julie wouldn't live anywhere else. "We in Marseille reject extremes, we love our city and love living here. I'll never leave. It's a *ville du coeur*, you know?"

One hopes, probably against reason, that other Europeans facing the newcomers in their midst will learn to adjust as artfully. ▲

Jeffrey Tayler is an Atlantic *correspondent.*

SPORT

Buffalo Shuffle

CAN A DEAL WITH TORONTO SAVE AN AMERICAN FOOTBALL TEAM—AND ITS DECAYING HOMETOWN?

By Gregg Easterbrook

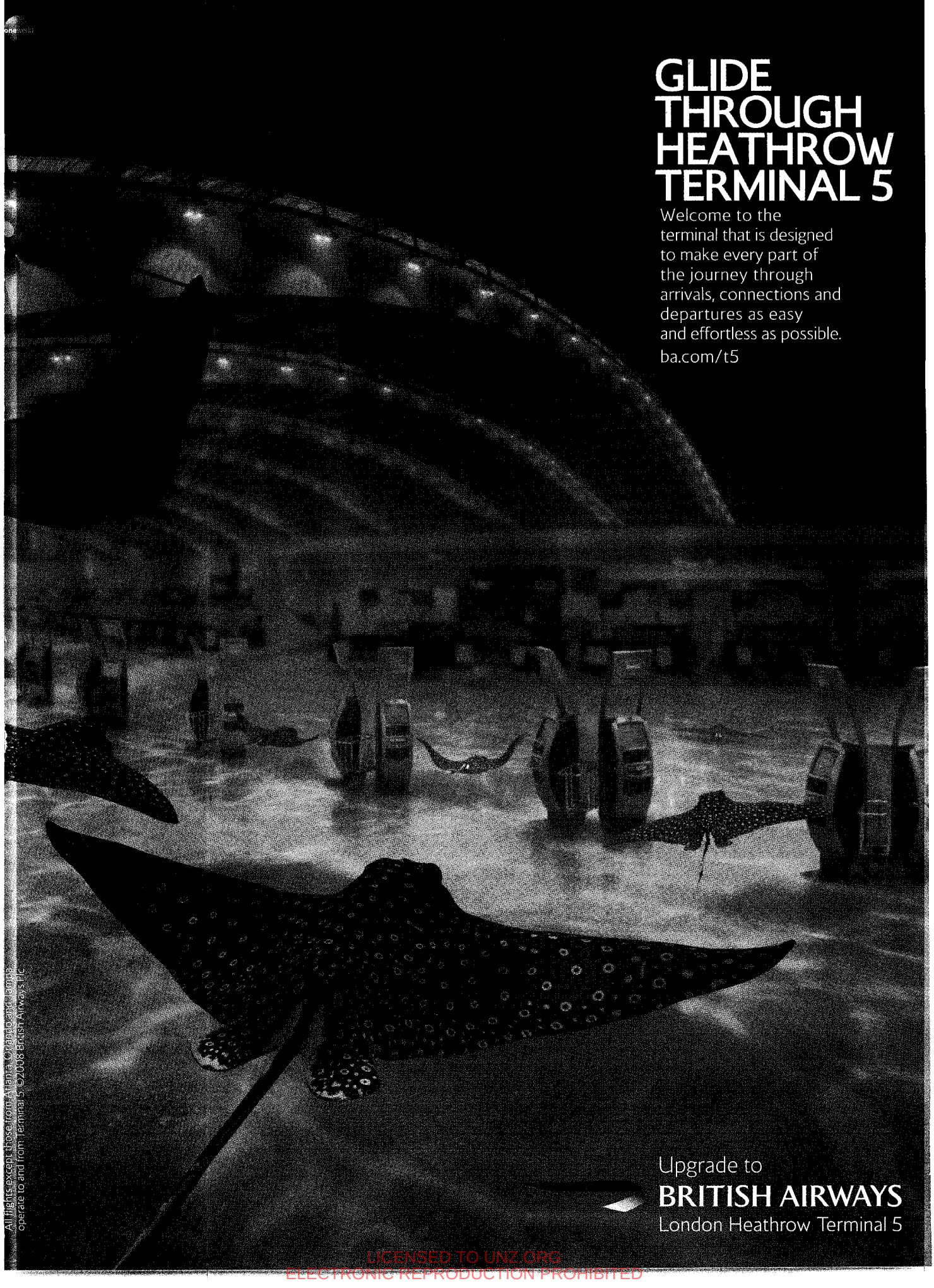
THE QUIRKY 1998 indie movie *Buffalo '66*, famed for its cameos ("Hey, wasn't that guy in the bowling alley Jan-Michael Vincent?"), shows some Buffalo residents as stuck psychologically in the mid-1960s, when the city's heavy industry was mighty and the Buffalo Bills were football's best team. I spent my boyhood in Buffalo and its Pleasantville-like border suburb, Kenmore; the area then thrived, and the magnificent Bills were its embodiment. As a 13-year-old, I attended the New Year's Day, 1967, contest between the Bills and the Kansas City Chiefs to determine which would face the Green Bay Packers in the inaugural Super Bowl. The game was at War Memorial Stadium, since demolished, a majestic Works Progress Administration edifice built by masons and known locally as the Rockpile; it stood right in the midst of the city, with no parking lots, because when the place was built fans arrived on foot or by streetcar. The sense of civic excitement was keen on that 1967 day; the Bills were the defending American Football League champions. But Dudley Meredith fumbled the opening kickoff, giving the Chiefs an easy touchdown, then—no, I can't go any further into that awful memory. Forty-one years later, looking up an account of the game, just coming across the name *Dudley Meredith* sent a chill along my spine. Kansas City met Green Bay in the first Super Bowl, and for Buffalo—the team and the place—it's been downhill since.

All true sons and daughters of Buffalo share a magic-realist belief that the city's fate and the Bills' are intertwined. Since that long-ago loss, Buffalo's steel and grain-milling industries have gone from boom to bust. The city's population has shrunk by nearly half. Abandoned grain silos line the urban lakefront like timber Paul Bunyan forgot to harvest. Had the Bills won the first Super Bowl, none of this would have happened!

RICK STEWART/GETTY IMAGES

Migrant workers: the Bills at a preseason "home" game in wealthy Toronto

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Next month, in the first regular-season NFL game ever to be played in Canada, the Bills will host the Miami Dolphins at the Rogers Centre, in flourishing Toronto. Under a recently signed agreement, the Bills will play a regular-season "home" game in Toronto, about 100 miles by car from Buffalo, in each of the next four years as well.

The Rogers Centre deal is widely seen as the first step toward an eventual move of the Bills to Ontario, and a "last one turn off the lights" moment for Buffalo. The Bills' owner, Ralph Wilson, who recently turned 90, is fiercely loyal to the city, but someday Wilson will cross the river, and between estate taxes and inheritances to his three daughters, the Bills may need to be sold when he passes. The Toronto communications magnate Ted Rogers, owner of the Rogers Centre, is an obvious potential customer.

But there's another, more hopeful possibility: the current arrangement might actually help keep the Bills in Buffalo—and perhaps even catalyze the city's revival.

A long-term deal by which the Bills play in both Toronto and Buffalo might make economic sense. Television revenue is the same for all NFL teams, meaning there's no small-city penalty for games in Buffalo; and despite its depressed economics, Buffalo is consistently in the top 10 for NFL attendance. If some games were played in Canada, the cost of season tickets in Buffalo would decline because of a smaller home slate, keeping season tickets affordable and attendance high. And the team would add a fan base in North America's fifth-largest city, giving itself two sets of supporters—one set quite prosperous, paying for tickets and merchandise with the suddenly valuable Canadian dollar.

The Bills could help forge mutual affection between the cities—even a regional identity. Buffalo's civic promotion has generally reached southward; in this newly globalized world, it should reach northward, toward a country that is as underappreciated among nations as Buffalo is among cities.

Connections to cosmopolitan, multicultural Toronto might change Buffalo's image from backward-focused to wave-of-the-future. Toronto is growing by leaps and bounds, and some portion of the growth may already be spilling over; most of the immigrants to Buffalo in recent years were Canadian. Buffalo offers urban living free of traffic jams and boasts one of the nation's last undeveloped stretches of premium waterfront. During its City of Light heyday, when Buffalo was the first electrified metropolis, Frank Lloyd Wright, Frederick Law Olmsted, and other fabled names designed homes and parks. In the lovely Delaware Park area, magnificent Beaux Arts homes sell at exceedingly low prices compared with homes in elite U.S. cities—or in Toronto.

So long as the Bills keep a foot in the city, they keep alive the dream of a Super Bowl win—a hope that an infusion of Loonies (Canadian dollars) might sustain. And should the Bills win the Super Bowl, Buffalo will return to national prominence. I don't just think this will happen, I *know* it will. ■

Gregg Easterbrook is an Atlantic *contributing editor.*

LANGUAGE

Freedom's Curse

WHY WASHINGTON'S CRUSADE AGAINST SWEARING ON THE AIRWAVES IS F*CKED UP

By Steven Pinker

A WORD IS an arbitrary label—that's the foundation of linguistics. But many people think otherwise. They believe in word magic: that uttering a spell, incantation, curse, or prayer can change the world. Don't snicker: Would you ever say "Nothing has gone wrong yet" without looking for wood to knock?

Swearing is another kind of word magic. People believe, contrary to logic, that certain words can corrupt the moral order—that *piss* and *Shit!* and *fucking* are dangerous in a way that *pee* and *Shoot!* and *freakin'* are not. This quirk in our psychology lies in the ability of taboo words to activate primitive emotional circuits in the brain.

My interest in swearing is (I swear) scientific. But swearing is not just a puzzle in cognitive neuroscience. It has figured in the most-famous free-speech cases of the past century, from *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley* to those of Lenny Bruce and George Carlin. Over the decades, the courts have steadily driven government censors into a precarious redoubt. In 1978, the Supreme Court, ruling on a daytime broadcast of Carlin's "Filthy Words" monologue, allowed the Federal Communications Commission to regulate "indecency" on broadcast radio and television during the hours when children were likely to be listening. The rationale, based on rather quaint notions of childhood and of modern media, was that over-the-air broadcasts are uninvited intruders into the home and can expose children to indecent language, harming their psychological and moral development.

In practice, the FCC recognized that the impact of taboo words depended on their context. So in 2003, when Bono said in a televised acceptance speech, "This is really, really fucking brilliant," the FCC did not punish the network. Bono, they noted, did not use *fucking* to "describe sexual or excretory organs or activities." He used it as an "adjective or expletive to emphasize an exclamation." This usage differed from Carlin's "patently offensive" routine, with its "repeated use, for shock value," of taboo words.

But the Bush-appointed commissioners flip-flopped on that case and subsequently targeted the Fox television network after it broadcast awards ceremonies in which Cher said of her critics, "So fuck 'em," and Nicole Richie asked, "Why do they even call it *The Simple Life*? Have you ever tried to get cow shit out of a Prada purse? It's not so fucking simple."

In 2007, after a federal court invalidated the FCC's policy as "arbitrary" and "capricious," the commission appealed to the Supreme Court. That's when I got dragged in. The FCC claimed that "even when the speaker does not intend a sexual meaning, a substantial part of the community ... will understand the word as freighted with an offensive sexual connotation." A brief filed earlier this year by the solicitor general in defense of the commission's position quoted from my book *The Stuff of Thought* as follows: "If you're an English speaker, you can't hear [words such as the F-Word] without calling to mind what they mean to an implicit community of speakers, including the emotions

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MIKE BYERS 2008, LEVY CREATIVE MANAGEMENT, NYC

that cling to them." In fact, the words elided in the brief were "*nigger* or *cunt* or *fucking*," and the context was an explanation of why people are offended "when an outsider refers to an African American as a *nigger*, or a woman as a *cunt*, or a Jewish person as a *fucking Jew*." I was certainly not arguing that when listeners hear "It's not so fucking simple," their minds turn to thoughts of copulation!

On the contrary, I noted that over time, taboo words relinquish their literal meanings and retain only a coloring of emotion, and then just an ability to arouse attention. This progression explains why many speakers are unaware that *sucker*, *sucks*, *bites*, and *blows* originally referred to fellatio, or that a *jerk* was a masturbator. It explains why *Close the fucking door*, *What the fuck?*, *Holy Fuck!*, and *Fuck you!* violate all rules of English syntax and semantics—they presumably replaced *Close the damned door*, *What in Hell?*, *Holy Mary!*, and *Damn you!* when religious profanity lost its zing and new words had to be recruited to wake listeners up.

The FCC was right that I think linguistic taboos aren't always a bad thing. *Fuck*-peppered speech gets tedious, and malicious epithets can express condemnable attitudes. But in a free society, these annoyances are naturally regulated in the marketplace of people's reactions—as Don Imus, Michael Richards, and Ann Coulter recently learned the hard way. It's not clear why swearing on the airwaves should be the government's business.

Indeed, given how language is interwoven with thought—the major theme of the book cited by the solicitor general—any ban on words will lead to absurdities. Take Carlin's monologue. Carlin mentioned the word *fuck* not to describe sexual activities, nor to shock his audience. He mentioned it to show how people use taboo words and to advance the argument that the government should not regulate them. The ruling that restricted his language restricted public criticism of the ruling itself—mocking the very rationale for free speech.

And consider the press release issued by FCC Chairman Kevin Martin expressing his displeasure when his ruling was struck down:

> Today the [court] said the use of the words 'fuck' and 'shit' by Cher and Nicole Richie was not indecent ... I find it hard to believe that the New York court would tell American families that 'shit' and 'fuck' are fine to say on broadcast television during the hours when children are most likely to be in the audience.

Somewhere, George Carlin is still smiling. ■

Steven Pinker is a professor of psychology at Harvard and the author, most recently, of The Stuff of Thought.

CAMPAIGNS

All the Right Moves

WILL FORMER NBA ALL-STAR KEVIN JOHNSON BECOME THE NEXT MAYOR OF SACRAMENTO?

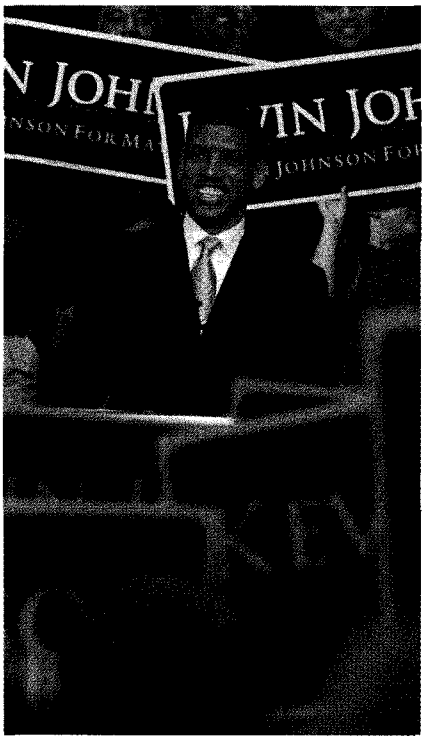
By Joshua Green

AS A LATE-SUMMER TWILIGHT descends on Sacramento, Kevin Johnson, formerly of the NBA's Phoenix Suns, is once more running the fast break. His teammates fan out before him, crisscrossing the blacktop and signaling their captain when they want to run a play. Johnson still wears expensive black Nikes. But above the ankles, his uniform has changed. A summer suit and silk tie signify his new game—politics—and the team he leads now is working to elect him mayor. As he walks down the middle of 33rd Avenue in the trim, quiet neighborhood of Fruitridge Manor, teenage volunteers race ahead to canvass the block, waving when someone comes to the door, at which point Johnson nods, excuses himself from a conversation, and breaks left or right into an athletic trot toward another Sacramentoan pleasantly surprised by this encounter with the city's famous son.

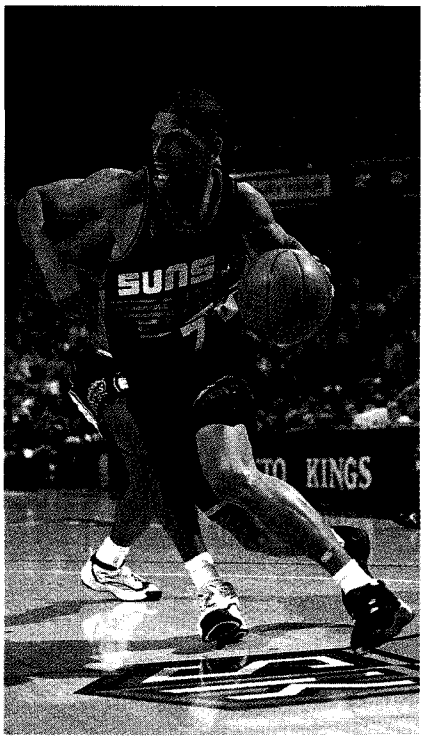
During the spring, Johnson did a lot of trotting, hitting an estimated 20,000 households ahead of the June election, in which he bested six other candidates, including, narrowly, fellow Democrat Heather Fargo, the stolid two-term incumbent whom he'll face again in a November 4 runoff. Outsiders generally can't resist the Obama-Clinton parallel, especially because Johnson endorsed Obama, and the mayor Clinton. But what makes the former All-Star point guard's trajectory interesting goes well beyond that. Even as a rookie, Johnson is as unusual in politics as he was in pro basketball.

"Have an exit strategy," Johnson remembers his grandfather telling him when he was a 22-year-old NBA newcomer. The advice took. Johnson, who had majored in political science at Berkeley, passed the long hours of travel reading books and policy papers while his teammates played cards and video games. After his first season with the Suns, he returned to Oak Park, the gritty neighborhood where he'd grown

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



KJ on the stump in March 2008 ...



... and on the court in December 1996

up, to establish his exit strategy: a nonprofit education organization called St. Hope Academy, which began as a portable classroom within his alma mater of Sacramento High School. Even as his NBA career progressed, Johnson became fluent in the language of policy entrepreneurs, salting his conversation with terms like *holistic community development* and *personalized learning*. A born networker, he traded on his celebrity to meet business and political luminaries wherever he traveled.

When he retired from the Phoenix Suns, in 2000, both the Republicans and the Democrats asked him to run for governor of Arizona. Johnson demurred, choosing instead to put into practice what he'd learned about the power of business to transform urban areas. In 2003, St. Hope took over Sacramento High, turning it into a charter school. In keeping with the precepts of "holistic" development—essentially, that urban renewal requires a web of education, business, arts, and housing—his organization took over an adjacent property, refurbishing the handsome Guild Theater and adding a gallery, a bookstore, and, after Johnson placed a call to Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, a roomy coffeehouse that bustled with customers the afternoon we swept through on an impromptu tour.

Of particular excitement to Johnson, because they sprang up independently of St. Hope, are new row houses just down the block. Johnson spotted the architect and, though we were running late, jogged over to say hi, beaming at what he saw: barbecuing on the sidewalk before us were half a dozen 30-ish hipsters, urban pioneers who promised renewal.

Officially, Johnson's mayoral campaign centers on public safety, better schools, and economic development, particularly of Sacramento's riverfront, which he believes could rival those he visited as a ballplayer in San Antonio, Chicago, and Washington. But his greatest appeal is that he exhibits that most useful of mayoral traits, an easygoing familiarity with the full menagerie of urban life, from black teenagers to white developers. To this, he adds a quality as common to good politicians as it is rare among pro athletes: eager solicitude for the opinions of others.

Sometimes this has amusing consequences. At evening's end, Johnson was the honored guest at a meeting of Hmong businessmen—a gathering over which the 6-foot-1-inch Johnson towered, much as most NBA players once towered over him. He talked briefly before opening the floor. For an hour he charmed and bantered (when necessary, through an interpreter), and he was getting ready to call it a night when he was hit with the kind of question every politician dreads, the kind you can't possibly prepare for. Traditional Hmong shamanism involves the sacrifice of live animals, typically in the home, a practice that had resulted in a felony arrest. What was his position on animal sacrifice?

Johnson froze. The room was silent. He seemed to be wondering whether this was a joke, before deciding that, no, it probably was not a joke, and he had better not laugh. Then Johnson, still quick on his feet, spotted the play and flashed a high-wattage smile. "I'm here tonight to learn what I can do for you," he said, "and this is exactly the type of issue that I'll address as mayor, which is why I would like, right now, for volunteers to raise their hands if they'll agree to be my liaison to the Hmong community." Soon, five candidates had declared themselves to uproarious applause. Johnson brought them all, giggling and snapping pictures, to the front of the room. Game over. ■

Joshua Green is an Atlantic *senior editor.*

PUBLIC WORKS

Turkish Bath

A NEW DAM COULD SUBMERGE ONE OF THE WORLD'S RICHEST HISTORICAL SITES.

By Christina Davidson

LIFE MOVES SLOWLY in Hasankeyf, a town on the banks of the Tigris in the heavily Kurdish region of far southeastern Turkey. Geography and political unrest have kept the modern world largely at bay. During my recent visit, Ali, a local artisan, demonstrated his trade for me—weaving rugs on a loom built by his grandfather, working in a room hewn from the limestone cliffs by a more distant ancestor.

Then the 21st century intruded, in the form of a lumbering Ankara Express bus. A group of Chinese tourists filed out, then stood in silence, absorbing

LEFT: JOSE LUIS VILLEGAS/MCT/LANDOV; RIGHT: ANDY HAYT/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Every day, we manage your assets with April 15 in mind.

Professional portfolio management with tax-sensitive strategies* to help you keep more of what you earn.

The more you grow your assets, the more taxes can impact your bottom line. That's why many investors are choosing Fidelity Private Portfolio Service® for year-round tax-sensitive investment management.* We put a variety of tax-related strategies to work for you, from municipal fund investing to tax-loss harvesting. Let us manage a portfolio that seeks to deliver better after-tax returns, to help you keep more of what you earn.

Fidelity Private Portfolio Service®

- Customized portfolio matched to your goals and managed by Fidelity professionals.
- Every buy, sell, and hold decision analyzed for potential federal income tax impact.
- Dedicated relationship officer.

CALL 800.544.2048
CLICK Fidelity.com/pps
VISIT Investor Centers located nationwide

Fidelity INVESTMENTS®

Smart move®

Before investing, consider the fund's investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses. Contact Fidelity for a prospectus containing this information. Read it carefully. Keep in mind, investing involves risk. The value of your investment will fluctuate over time and you may gain or lose money.

* Fidelity Private Portfolio Service® (PPS) applies tax-sensitive investment management techniques (including tax-loss harvesting) on a limited basis, at its discretion, primarily with respect to determining when assets in a client's account should be bought or sold. As a discretionary investment management service, any assets contributed to an investor's account which PPS does not elect to retain may be sold at any time after contribution. An investor may have a gain or loss when assets are sold.

Fidelity Private Portfolio Service® may be offered through the following Fidelity Investments companies: Strategic Advisers, Inc., a registered investment adviser; Fidelity Personal Trust Company, FSB ("FPT"), a federal savings bank; or Fidelity Management Trust Company ("FMTC"). Non-deposit investment products and trust services offered through FPT and FMTC and their affiliates are not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency, are not obligations of any bank, and are subject to risk, including possible loss of principal. **These services provide discretionary money management for a fee.**

Brokerage services provided by Fidelity Brokerage Services LLC, a Fidelity Investments company and a Member of NYSE and SIPC. Custody and other services provided by National Financial Services LLC, a Fidelity Investments company and a Member of NYSE and SIPC. 489188.3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the centuries of history before them. Archaeologists believe Hasankeyf may be one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world, dating back some 10,000 years. The cliffs lining the river are speckled with gaping black holes—homes carved out of the soft rock by cave dwellers thousands of years ago. What remains of a citadel built by the Byzantines in the fourth century A.D., and later expanded and reinforced by the Artukids and Ayyubids, rises above the city. Other ruins show the influence of Assyrians, Romans, Seljuks, Mongols, Ottomans—successive waves of conquerors who fought for dominance of the lucrative trading routes in northern Mesopotamia.

MORE ONLINE

For a slideshow of the endangered town of Hasankeyf, visit www.theatlantic.com/hasankeyf.

THEATLANTIC.COM

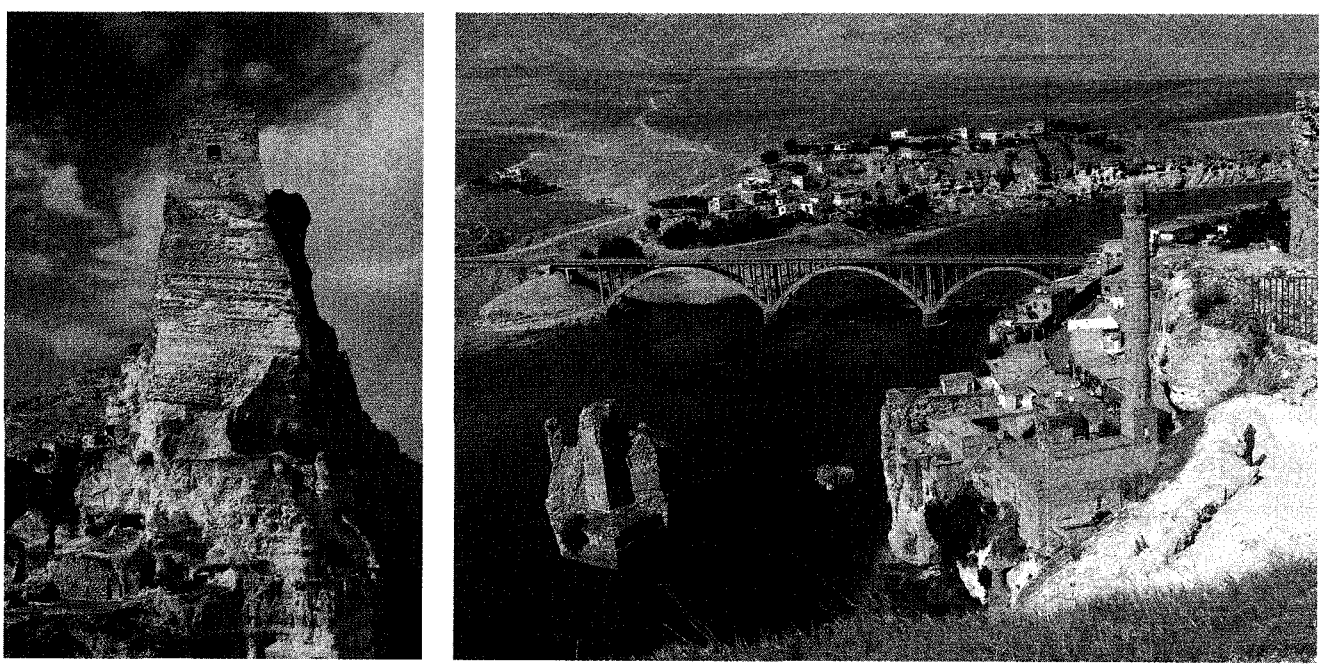
Hasankeyf may soon be hit by another conquering wave—this time, a watery one that could drown its history. Fifty miles downstream, near the village of Ilisu, a consortium of German, Swiss, Austrian, and Turkish contractors is preparing to build a massive hydroelectric dam that would catch water from the Tigris just before the river spills into Syria and Iraq. If all goes as planned, most of Hasankeyf will be submerged by a reservoir. Ali pointed out the projected waterline—about halfway up the spire of a 15th-century minaret.

It's not that the ruins went unnoticed during discussions about the dam. In 1978, the Turkish government declared Hasankeyf a "first degree" site for archaeological conservation, mandating legal protection for its ruins. But within five years—a period that saw the birth of the militant Kurdish group known as the PKK and the escalation of fighting between Kurds and Turkish security forces—Ankara had approved plans for the project. The government argues that the dam will bring power and irrigation to the region; opponents contend that much of the electricity generated will go to other parts of the country, and some view the dam as part of an overall effort to eradicate Kurdish culture. In 2001, the project faltered after an international campaign persuaded a foreign export-credit agency to withdraw its support, prompting the contractors to pull out.

Turkey did not give up, however. In August 2006, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan broke ground on the dam. His government had assembled a new partnership of European contractors and announced proposals intended to appease foreign critics. Residents of the affected areas would be relocated; artifacts deemed to have historical or cultural significance would be moved to higher ground. Of course, it's not that easy: some things cannot be moved, and because little of the area has undergone archaeological excavation, experts can only speculate about what lies underground. Last year, in a chamber at the base of a cliff, a security guard uncovered, purely by chance, a remarkable Roman mosaic—one of several newly discovered artistic works contradicting previous assumptions that the Roman presence was strictly military.

Foreign underwriters have warned Turkey that funding is contingent on certain conditions pertaining to resettlement, the protection of artifacts, and the project's environmental impact. Meanwhile, the World Monuments Fund has added Hasankeyf to its list of the 100 most endangered sites on Earth. But plans for the dam are proceeding, and Hasankeyf is on schedule to be flooded in five to seven years. When this happens, the government says, the area will find itself with new tourism opportunities: visitors will be drawn by water sports in and around the reservoir. And although history-minded tourists may no longer be able to explore Hasankeyf's archaeology on foot, they might strap on scuba gear and take a dive through the ruins instead. ■

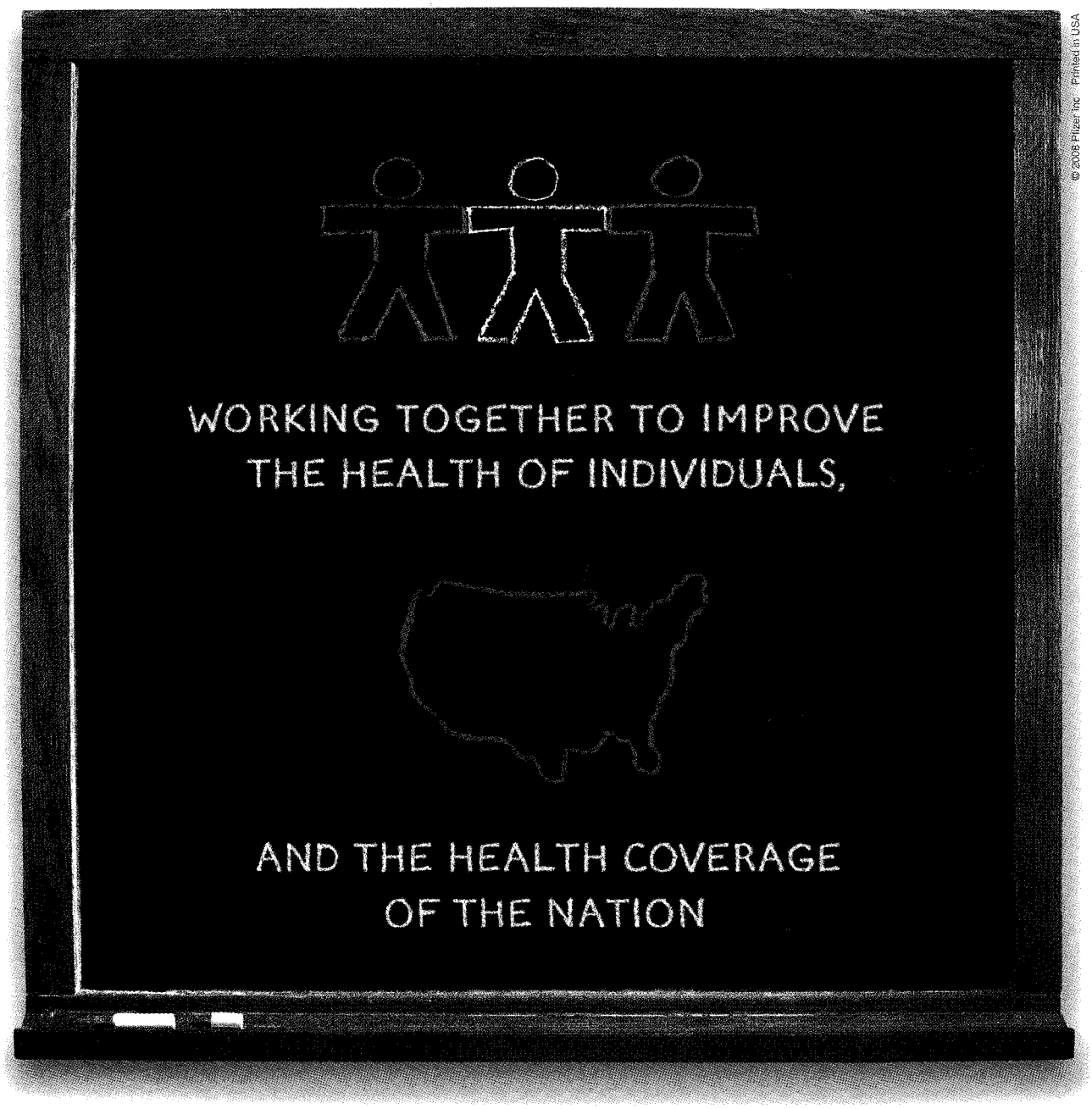
Christina Davidson writes about national security, terrorism, and the Middle East.



CHRISTINA DAVIDSON

Après le déluge: *This 14th-century tower would remain above water—unlike almost everything in this view from it.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



© 2008 Pfizer Inc Printed in USA

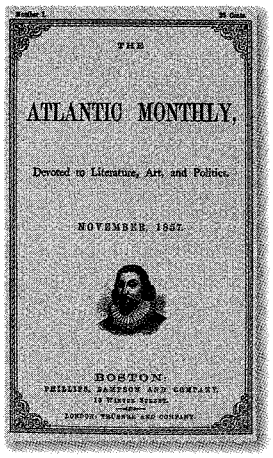
Today, there are over 45 million Americans without health insurance. At Pfizer, we're working to help change that. We've joined with business, non-profit, and government partners to ensure that all Americans have comprehensive health insurance and prescription coverage for the medicines they need. To learn more, visit pfizer.com/healthcarereform.

Pfizer

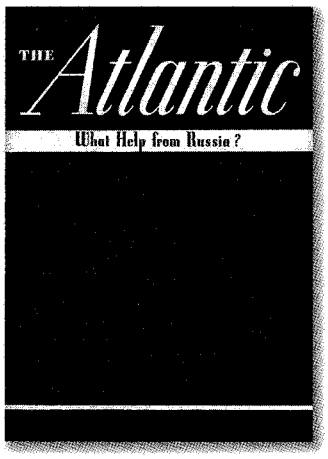
Working together for a healthier world™

www.pfizer.com/healthcarereform

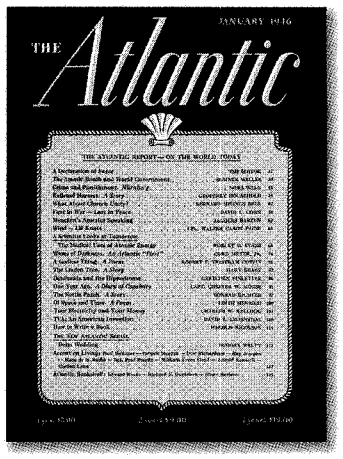
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



NOVEMBER 1857

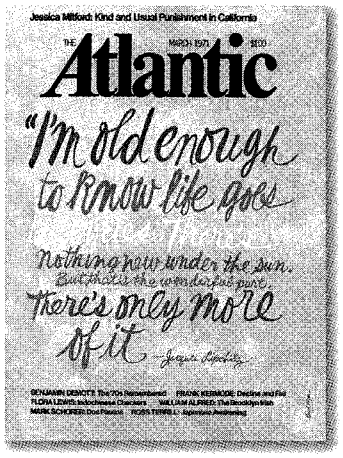


DECEMBER 1939

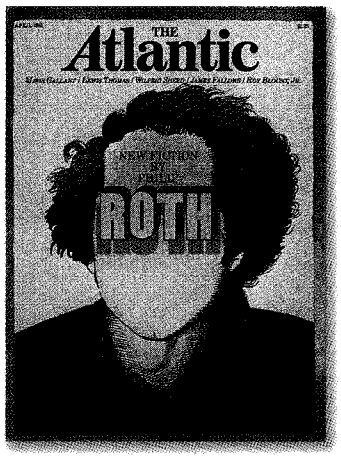


JANUARY 1946

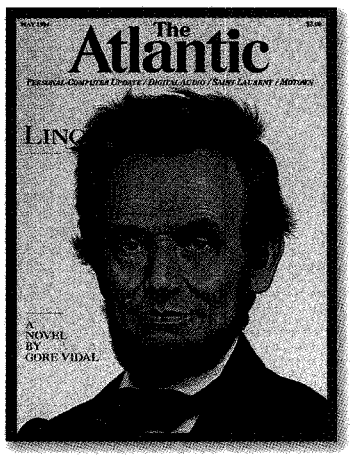
NOVEMI



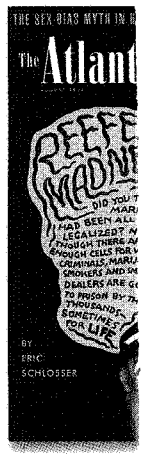
MARCH 1971



APRIL 1981



MAY 1984



AUGI

DESIGN

A Question of Balance

HOW DO YOU REDESIGN *THE ATLANTIC*?

By Michael Bierut

FOR A GRAPHIC designer, few jobs are as challenging as designing a magazine. Unlike a logo or a poster, the design of which can rely on blunt simplicity, a magazine is a complex organism, the result of an intricate interplay of words and pictures. Any single issue represents thousands of minute decisions about typography, layout, photography, and illustration. And these decisions are made within an accepted system of conventions—preconceptions we all share about how a magazine is read—and more practical and mundane limitations like budgets and schedules.

For these reasons, I was both honored and daunted to receive the commission to create a new design for *The Atlantic*. I know the magazine well, having been a faithful reader for the past 20 years, and unlike many designers, I have a sometimes unhelpful suspicion of change. How could we make it new and better without threatening the things that readers like me enjoy so much? It's a hard problem.

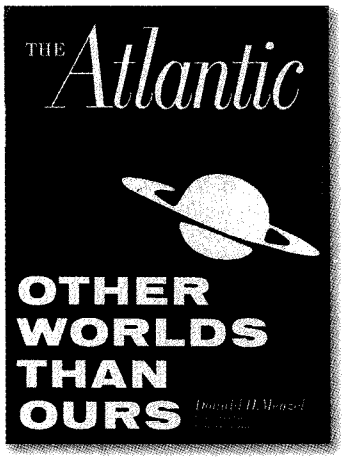
Yet every magazine that you and I like has a personality. We are drawn to it, issue after issue, by a combination of the comfort of familiarity and the promise of surprise. The process of redesign, then, is simply one of discovering the right visual analogue for a distinctive editorial voice, one that allows for both constancy and change.

We began with the nameplate, the way the magazine's name appears on the cover. No one buys a magazine because of the nameplate, but as a starting point of the design process, it can provide important clues about the publication's overall direction. How traditional? How modern? Bold and authoritative, or quiet and elegant?

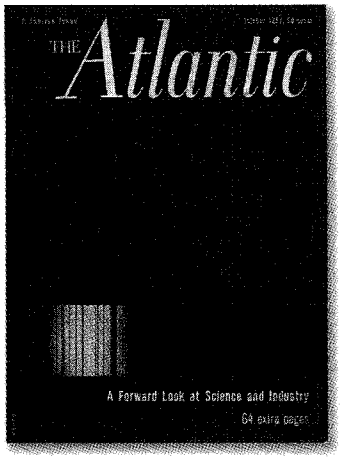
Working with the magazine's editors and its art director, Jason Treat, our team at Pentagram—which included my partner Luke Hayman as well as designers Joe Marianek and Ben King—looked at many possibilities for the nameplate, including dozens that we invented. But we kept coming back to one: an adaptation of a design that had appeared on the magazine for more than 35 years in the middle of the last century. We

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

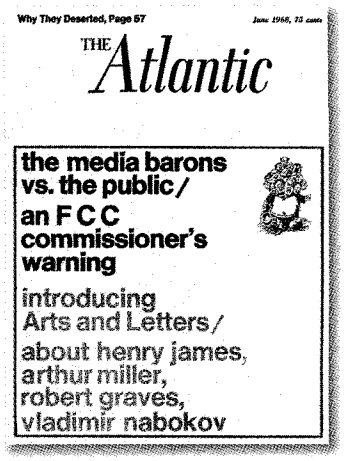
'47



NOVEMBER 1955



OCTOBER 1957

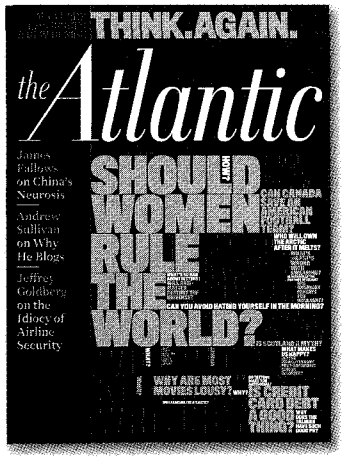


JUNE 1968

'94

FEBRUARY 2001

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2004



NOVEMBER 2008

weren't tempted by its nostalgic characteristics: indeed, since it was from before my time, I had no associations with it, and I suspected most readers wouldn't either (although an issue from that era did make an appearance as a significant prop on *Mad Men* last season). Instead, we were struck by how it managed to look both contemporary and timeless. Based on the classic 18th-century typeface Bodoni, it featured an italic *A* that to our eyes provided just the right note of idiosyncrasy. (I assure readers with a political bent that there is no significance to the direction of the letter's slant.)

With the nameplate nodding to the magazine's heritage, we were free to try out some very contemporary approaches to the cover. *The Atlantic*, we discovered, demands a careful balance between intellectual engagement and entertainment. In a magazine of ideas, writers depend on words to build their arguments, but we didn't want *The Atlantic*'s pages to look like homework. Nor did we want to diminish the gravitas that its subjects demand by larding the book with graphic tricks that could be rightly dismissed as eye candy. The challenge with the cover, then, was to navigate a course between the look of a starchy academic journal and that of an overheated newsweekly.

MORE ONLINE

For more on the evolution of The Atlantic*'s cover design since 1857, visit* www.theatlantic.com/covers.

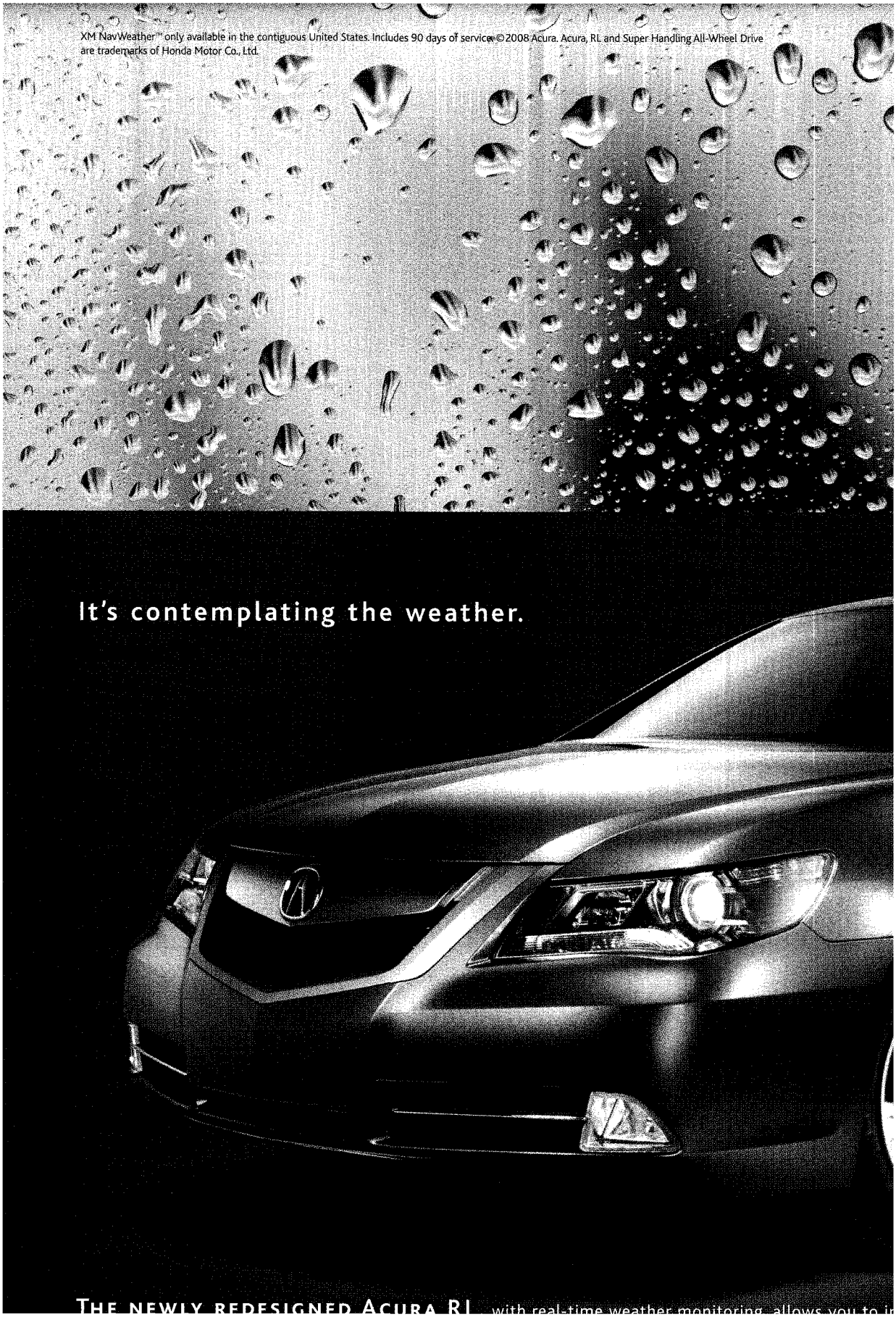
THEATLANTIC.COM

The two fonts we settled on for the cover provided the necessary ingredients: Mercury, an elegant serif typeface, and a bold sans serif called Titling Gothic. A vertical information band aligned with *The Atlantic*'s distinctive *A* on the left of the cover provides a place to highlight important authors and stories for the benefit of subscribers and newsstand browsers. (It will eliminate, we hope, a wasteful scourge in the magazine world, that floppy and redundant half cover created to support newsstand sales.) The cover's two typefaces are the main font families used throughout the magazine, where that balance between ideas and urgency is played out in what we hope are surprising and engaging ways.

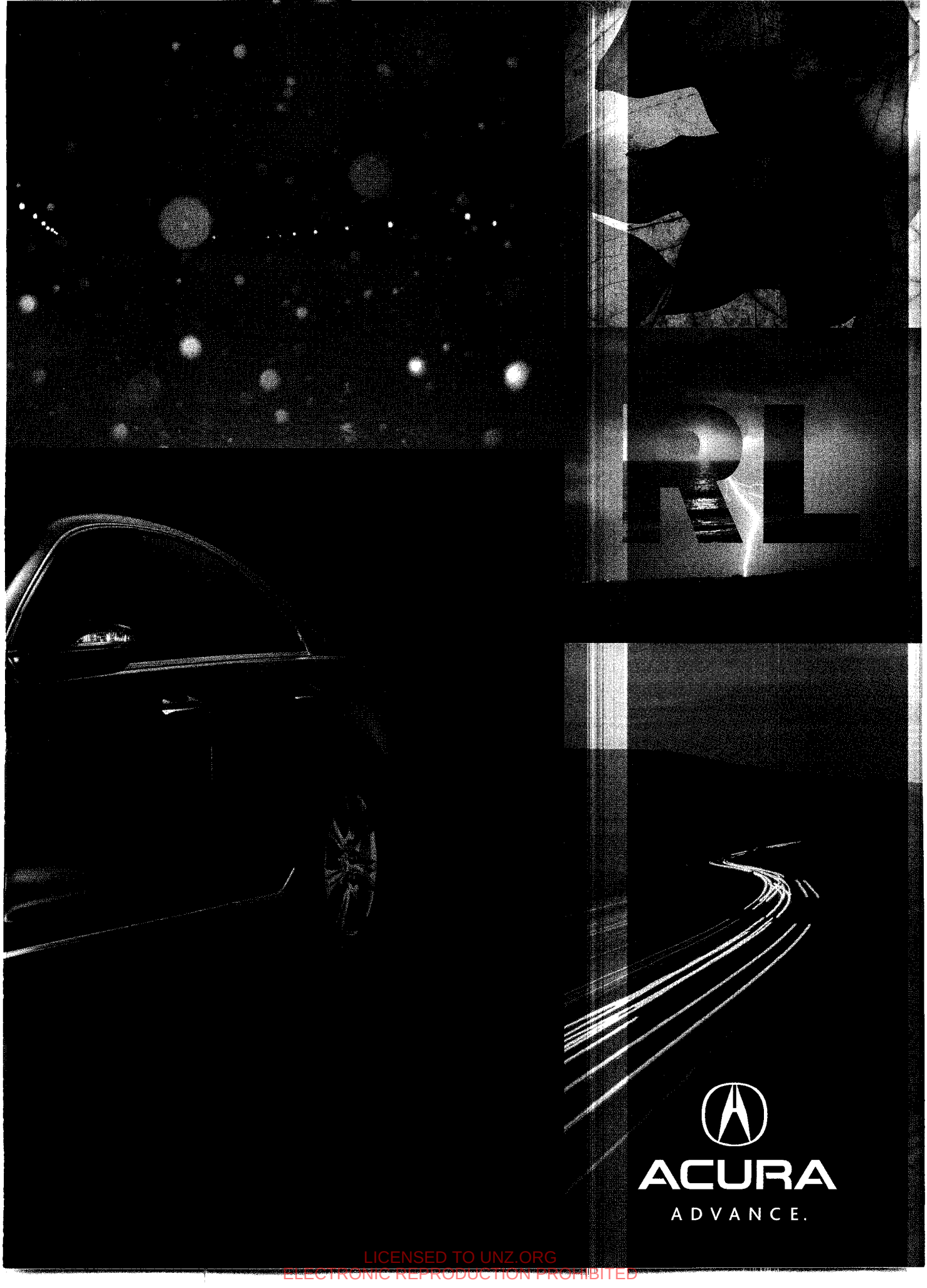
I'm pleased with the solution, both as a designer and as an *Atlantic* reader. And I'm also pleased that, because a magazine is an organism, not a poster, we'll be able to guide the design's development—and, I hope, make it better and better—with every new issue. Stay tuned.

Michael Bierut is a partner at Pentagram design firm.

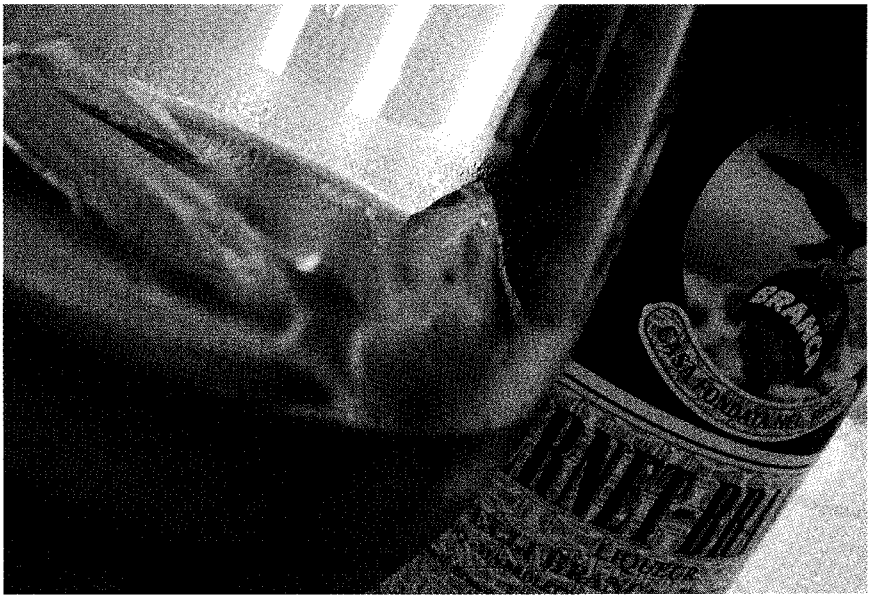
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



DRINK

The Bitter Beginning

LEARNING TO LOVE A BRACING ITALIAN LIQUEUR

By Wayne Curtis

YOUR FIRST SIP of Fernet Branca, an Italian liqueur, will be akin to waking up in a foreign country and finding a crowd of people arguing in agitated, thorny voices outside your hotel window. It's an event that's at once alarming and slightly thrilling, and leaves you wanting to know more. Other than that, it's hard to describe what Fernet Branca tastes like; it mostly tastes like Fernet Branca. But to give you an idea: in 1960, Betsy von Furstenberg was suspended from Actors' Equity for spiking Tony Randall's onstage drink with it. Randall believed he had been poisoned with iodine.

That first sip may also strike you as uncommonly sharp and bitter, which is not surprising, since Fernet is a type of spirit called an *amaro*—Italian for "bitter." (Other well-known *amari*, although less throat-catching than Fernet, include Ramazzotti, Averna, and Campari.) But Fernet's defining bitterness is layered with complications, like a well-lived life.

I learned just how complicated last April, when the chairman of the company that makes Fernet, Niccolò Branca, showed me around his factory in Milan. The building is palazzo-like, with a grandeur that recalls a time when illustrations of factories were featured on company letterheads. At one point during the tour, Branca, an impeccably polite gentleman with enviable hair, opened the door to a dim, cavernous room and beckoned me in.

Here were acres of burlap sacks piled atop pallets and containing the 40 or so barks, roots, fungi, herbs, and spices that go into Fernet Branca. These include myrrh, gentian root, cinchona bark, orris root, zedoary, and saffron. To walk through the room is to reconnoiter a peculiar olfactory geography, crossing from the republic of one aroma into another, with the borderlands between the two sometimes under détente, but often not.

Branca's great-great-grandfather conceived the original formula in 1845. "It was born as a medicine," Branca said, and for decades Fernet was touted for its healthful effects. As recently as 1962, *Suburbia Today* recommended it for "overeating, flatulence, hangovers, gas pains, [and] lifting yourself off the floor when you've mixed oysters and bananas."

Fernet Branca remains a popular cure for hangovers, and is often served as a digestif—something to sip after an overly generous dinner. One theory is that bitterness, typically associated with poison, cues the body to accelerate the production of saliva and digestive juices. This is considered a matter of known fact among many American herbalists and Europeans generally, but is greeted with skepticism by others. Nicholas Talley, a gastroenterologist at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida, told me there's little data to support this. "It's folklore, frankly," he said. "You put anything in your mouth, and it increases the production of saliva and gastric acid."

Well, maybe. But before discovering Fernet Branca, my usual solution for overeating was to lie on my back on the floor for 35 minutes. Fernet does the trick without my having to go horizontal, and in half the time.

Fernet is popular not only in Italy but in Argentina, where it's usually mixed with cola, and in Germany, where, Branca told me, it's mixed with Red Bull. (He followed this statement with a meaningful silence.) San Francisco accounts for about 25 percent of U.S. sales. R Bar, in the Tenderloin area, goes through some 100 bottles a month, and co-owner Tod Alsman says that about 95 percent is consumed as shots, often with a ginger-ale chaser. Why so popular in San Francisco but not in other cities that historically have had large Italian American populations? "Nothing really seems to explain it," Alsman admits.

I'd be willing to wager that Fernet will spread beyond the Bay Area. The taste is big, and America is having an extended love affair with big flavors. And bitter, which had a heyday here in the late 19th century, seems to have a renewed allure. Think of Starbucks, Jägermeister, and those barbed, hard-to-swallow salad greens now found even at the Piggly Wiggly. This rediscovery is a good thing, extending the palette of our palates. Bitter is one of just five or six tastes that our receptors can perceive, and ignoring bitter is as ill-considered as a painter eschewing a primary color.

Spirits rarely have anything like a wine's *terroir*—the industrial process of distillation tends to strip out nuance. But in Fernet Branca, I find something even more rare. Call it *tempoir*: the taste of a time that's long since passed us by. ■

Wayne Curtis is an Atlantic *correspondent.*

AMY AND JONNY SEPONARA-SILLS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE AMERICAN DREAM COULD USE A DOCTOR.

Right now a lot of Americans are struggling. People are worried about the future, not just for themselves, but also for their children and grandchildren. They sense that the American Dream is coming apart at the seams. And for good reason.

Many people are just one illness away from financial ruin, or they are already there. Many don't sign up for their company health care plan, if there is one, because it takes too much out of their paycheck.

And American businesses are struggling to compete because of the high cost of health care that foreign companies don't have to pay. We have outstanding doctors and nurses, the best technology and good medicines, but our system doesn't work for the people who need it most.

Some politicians say the aging of America is the problem, but the experts know better.

The head of Congress's own budget office points out that it's soaring health care costs — not the older population — that's the problem. We're spending $2.3 trillion on health care a year, and that number is climbing. There are plenty of sound policy ideas on how to fix this mess: more information technology (every other part of society is ahead of the health care system in this area); more investment in prevention and wellness; better management of chronic illnesses; and providing care that is effective, not wasted (appropriate care is received only a little more than half the time). And while it's true that we need to get everybody covered with health insurance, alone that is not enough.

Today there is new hope and renewed determination. Americans have rallied around this issue and are demanding solutions for accessible, affordable, quality health care.

So why can't we move forward? Because we are caught up in finger pointing, apathy and political paralysis.

We can solve these problems by getting involved and pushing our elected officials toward change. We can hold the candidates accountable for their promises of health care reform and make it a priority in the next administration and the next Congress. Let's be ready.

During the past 50 years, AARP has been at the forefront of advancing the cause of health care in America, and we're even more committed to solutions for the challenges of the 21st century.

Ultimately, we will help make it possible for all Americans to have access to affordable, quality health care. We are determined to make this part of the American Dream a reality once again.

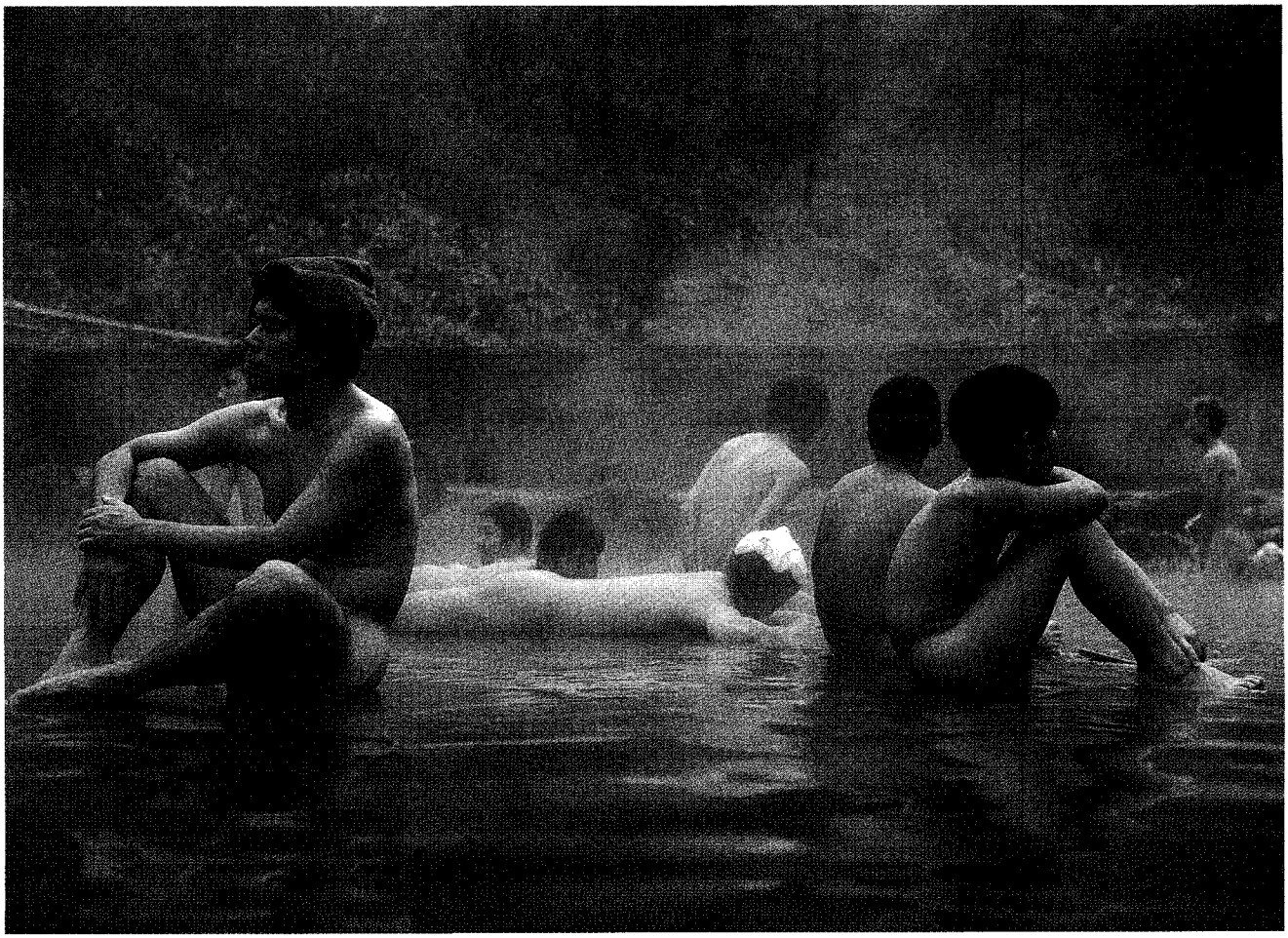
We're working hard by advocating and laying the groundwork. But we need your help. Get involved and make a difference.

For more ideas on how you can help improve the ailing health care system, go to aarp.org/champion.

AARP℠ 50th Anniversary

HEALTH / FINANCES / CONNECTING / GIVING / ENJOYING

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Satisfying the lizard part of our brain? An onsen, *or hot spring, in Kusatsu*

FERNANDO MOLERES/PANOS PICTURES

TRAVEL

The Gangster in My Tub

THE AUTHOR FINDS HIMSELF IN HOT WATER AT A JAPANESE *ONSEN*.

By Charles C. Mann

One of the first things to ask yourself when walking into a Japanese bath is, *Am I Angelina Jolie?* If the answer is yes, consider leaving. For a reason I'll explain in a minute, most Japanese baths don't let in people who are heavily tattooed.

The baths are known as *onsen*—hot springs. Japan being made up of volcanic islands, hot springs are plentiful. According to Anne Hotta and Yoko Ishiguro, the authors of *A Guide to Japanese Hot Springs*, if you visited one *onsen* a week, you would need more than 40 years to get to them all. Most *onsen* have associated inns, or *ryokan*, and the weekend trip to a mountain *ryokan* is as authentically and peculiarly Japanese as the August trip to the Mediterranean is authentically and peculiarly Italian.

Nonetheless, *onsen* can be intimidating. The Japanese are great at inventing complex systems of rules, and not so great at explaining those rules to foreign visitors. The *onsen* ban on tattoos is an example: it's inexplicable unless you know that big, ornate tattoos are associated with the violent mobsters known as *yakuza*. More important, from the foreign visitor's perspective, is the rule that cleaning and soaking are two distinct activities, and that baths are emphatically not for cleaning. Instead, you first go to an area outside the bath, where you sit on a little stool and wash yourself with fanatic thoroughness. Near the stool are a basin (fill with water, dump on self), a handheld shower (alternate use with basin), and big bottles of liquid soap and shampoo. The goal is to be so meticulously clean before climbing into the bath that you will not share any dirt with the other participants. If you fail to clean off, as I did the first time I went to an *onsen*, you will be rewarded by an unusual sight: half a dozen annoyed, naked people simultaneously exiting the water.

MORE ONLINE

For a slideshow of Japanese inns and baths narrated by Charles C. Mann, visit www.theatlantic.com/baths.

THEATLANTIC.COM

Almost all *onsen* have separate sections for men and women, although some have facilities where families can soak together. They may switch male and female wings from one day to the next, even from one hour to the next, perhaps to forestall any charge of favoritism. Which sex is currently occupying which space is indicated outside, with the character for *man* or *woman*. Visitors would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Top: the Takaragawa onsen*; bottom: some rare instances of* yakuza *in the baths*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MICHAEL S. YAMASHITA/CORBIS; GIDEON MENDEL/CORBIS; MICHAEL RUBENSTEIN/REDUX

be advised to learn those characters, and to check them every time. Failure to do so will have consequences as predictable as they are humiliating.

Then there's the special towel most *ryokan* give guests. Small enough to use as a washcloth, it is just big enough to hang modestly in front of your tenders during the walk from the washing area to the bath. Different *onsen* then have different towel-regulation schemes. Some don't let you put the towel in the bath, because that might get the water dirty; some want you to bring the towel into the bath, because otherwise cold blobs of cotton might litter the floor. Some guys finesse the issue by folding their towel and putting it on their head. Few Americans seem able to carry this off. Because I can never figure out beforehand which towel scheme is preferred, I simply copy what everyone else is doing.

Every *onsen* has at least one bath in which the water is very hot. You've-gotta-be-kidding hot. Involuntary-exclamation-and-fanning-yourself hot. As you sit in this water, you can feel your muscles unkink. Many *onsen* also have a cold bath, usually just big enough for one or two people. Guests are supposed to plunge into this for short times only: hogging the cold-water bath is a no-no. So is jamming yourself in when it's already occupied.

Why is all this fun? Japanese people sometimes explain the attraction with mumbo-jumbo about how *onsen* provide a spiritual experience. Personally, I think there's something in the lizard part of our brain that really likes sitting around in hot water with no clothes on in a beautiful mountain setting. Also to be taken into account is that after the *onsen*, you can put on your *yukata* (a bathrobe-like garment provided by every *ryokan*) and eat wonderful food—the culinary quality at Japanese inns is amazingly high.

Don't worry about not knowing the rules, I always tell first-timers. Ignorance can actually be an advantage. I once went to a mountain *onsen* with my brother-in-law Al, a physicist who works in Japan. Inside, some guy with tattoos had gotten in and was—just what you'd expect from a gangster!—boorishly hogging the cold-water bath. All the other bathers were glaring at him, but nobody said anything, inhibited by what was either Japanese politeness or the fear of getting murdered. My brother-in-law and I also wanted to get in the cold tub. Suddenly Al turned to me and said, "There's only one thing the people here are more afraid of than a *yakuza*: a foreigner!" We grabbed our towels and mashed ourselves into the tub, practically on top of the mobster. "Howdy," I said. The hardened criminal's jaw dropped in horror. He was gone in seconds.

Sometimes it's great to be a barbarian. A moment later, when we returned to the hot bath, the water felt absolutely wonderful. ■

Charles C. Mann is an Atlantic *correspondent.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TECHNOLOGY

Self-Reliance 2008

LIKE YOUR LEATHERMAN? LOVE YOUR IPHONE? STILL TO COME: THE ULTIMATE OPEN-SOURCE ULTRAGADGET

By Bruce Sterling

> A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who teams it, farms it, peddles, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always, like a cat, falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls.
>
> —Ralph Waldo Emerson
> "Self-Reliance," 1841

THE EMERSONIAN STRAIN in American thought makes the individual the microcosm of society. Full of hackerly vim, our sturdy lad is all things to everyone, a tinkering geek as agile as a falling cat. But where will he keep all his hardware?

Even the most polymathic, dexterous, open-ended individual is, after all, just one guy. He might retreat to Walden Pond for the simple life alone with a hoe, but if he dwells among mankind, he'll need a veritable Gutenberg Galaxy of tools.

Much like an Emerson essay, which rambles alarmingly over the page, transcendentally banging on topics from Vishnu to whaling harpoons, he'll need a portable, personal device that can plausibly tackle every contingency. And, thanks to rambling West Coast zealot Tim Leatherman, he can obtain one: yes, the legendary Leatherman Multi-Tool, inspired in part by Tim's bruising contacts with two profoundly un-American societies, Vietnam and Communist Eastern Europe.

In war-ravaged Vietnam, the impoverished locals had no tools at all and, to Tim's amazement, were fixing motorcycles with their fingers. In Eastern Europe, the state had commandeered the means of production, so the locals watched the decay of their cars, streets, lights, and toilets with an Orwellian resignation lubricated with raw booze.

Bedeviled on his travels by a balky Fiat 600 and faulty hotel plumbing, Tim tackled whatever he could. But because his humble pocketknife lacked pliers, it soon failed him. Out of this frustration came the Leatherman, an Emerson essay in stainless steel.

Twenty-five years later, more than 3 million Leatherman tools are sold each year. This despite the fact that the Leatherman Multi-Tool can never do a full-scale job of repair. It's too generalized, and it's just too small—the ladies' versions are downright dainty. As a working tool, it doesn't balance right, and the folding handle is clumsy to the grip.

However, given that it unites pliers, a saw, knives, an awl, a ruler, screwdrivers, strippers, and crimpers, a Leatherman makes it mathematically impossible to stop tinkering. Leatherman tools are durable, rarely rust, and have a certain tight-mouthed, implacable Yankee quality. They're a state of mind.

The postmillennial version of a Leatherman is the Apple iPhone. Like all digital technologies, the iPhone has yet to achieve the hard-grained, Spartan elegancies of the steely Leatherman. It makes up for this with its cannibal appetite for other tools. Leathermans will disappear—I commonly give mine away—but iPhones devour other tools, digesting them into virtualized application services: phone, camera, e-mail, Web browser, text-messaging, music and video players, whole planet-girdling sets of urban Google maps, house keys, pedometer, TV remote, seismometer, Breathalyzer, alarm clock, video games, radio, bar-code scanner ... the target list grows by the day.

Yet even these analog and digital avatars of the Emersonian impulse only point to the ending of the tale. Lurking offstage (in a lab at Bath University in the U.K., to be precise) is tomorrow's self-reliant machine, the analog/digital hybrid "Replicating Rapid Prototyper." The "RepRap" is a skeletal framework with a nozzled printhead that moves in three dimensions. Its ultimate purpose is to manufacture most everything, through digital plans, by means of various forms of solidifying liquid goop. It can even manufacture itself, which is the point of the effort. Looking as simple as an Erector Set, it's a personal metamachine that machines machines.

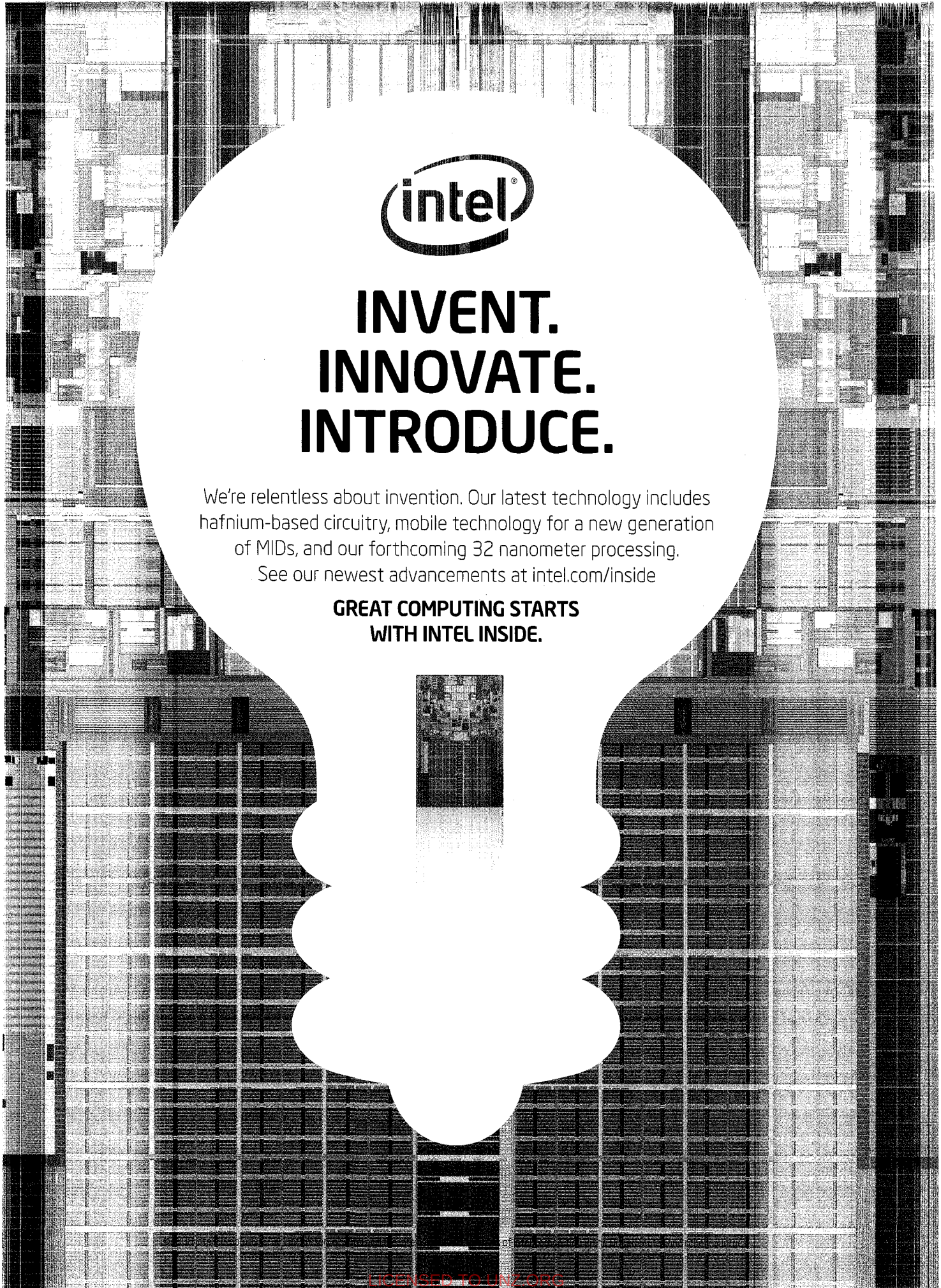
Here, the entire technological surround of Emerson vanishes into an inchoate cornucopia, an open-source ultragadget that Thoreau might tote to his pond and promptly use to build a private civilization. From the meanest knickknacks in the Yankee peddler's pack to, yes, an entire township.

All by himself.

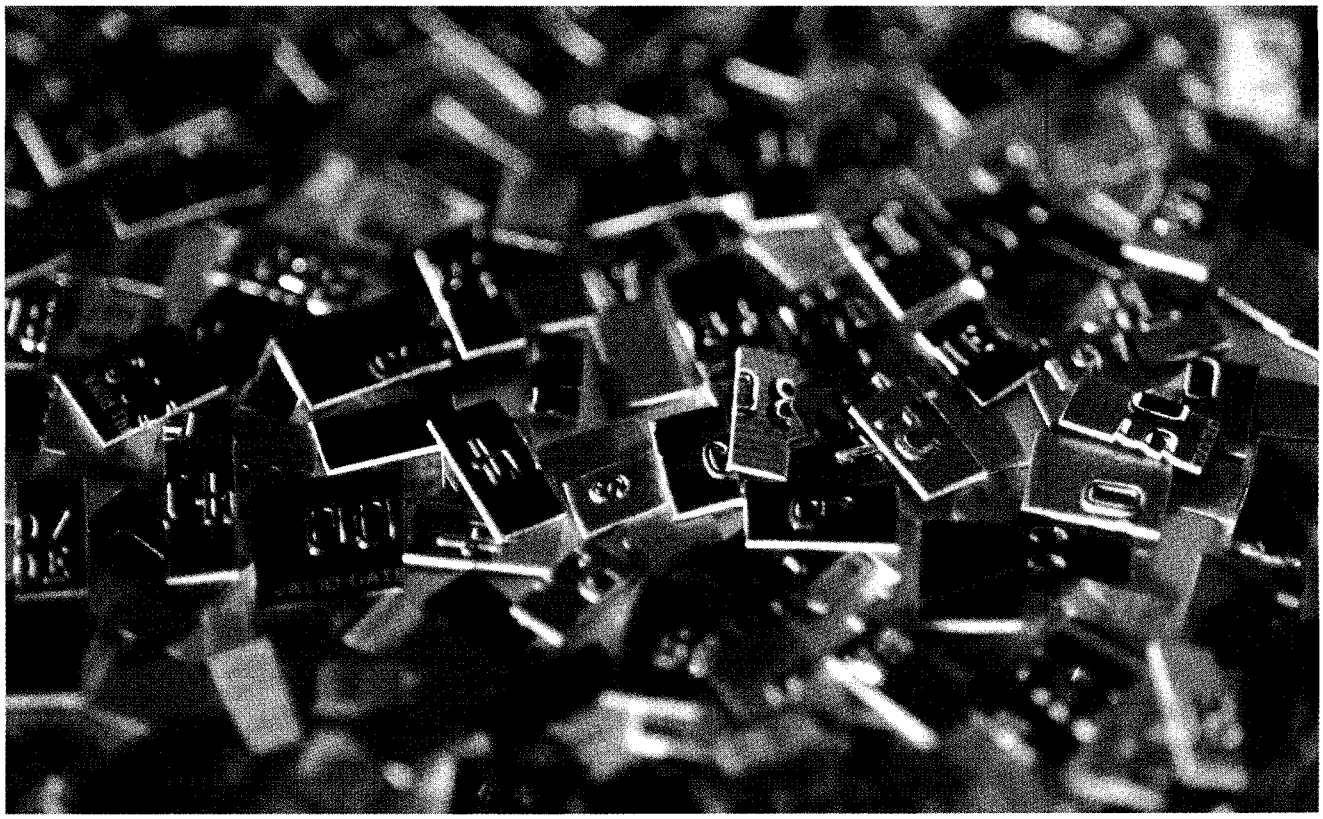
Bruce Sterling's new book, The Caryatids, *will be published next February.*

JASON SCHNEIDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



For many poor Americans, credit cards can still be a better deal than payday loans and pawnshops.

The Case for Debt

Public anxiety over "excessive" consumer debt has a long, and misguided, history.

By Virginia Postrel

A COUPLE OF WEEKS after last Christmas, a newspaper reporter telephoned Todd Zywicki, a George Mason University law professor who studies bankruptcy and consumer credit. How, she wanted to know, were American families going to pay the huge credit-card bills they'd run up buying presents? Well, Zywicki responded, how had they paid their Christmas bills the previous year, and the year before that, and the year before that? "It never occurred to her that this was an old story," he says.

Or, as we in the journalism business call it, an evergreen: always in season. Through good times and bad, Americans predictably rack up consumer debt, and that debt predictably generates public and private hand-wringing about how it will ever get paid. When two Federal Reserve economists examined all the *New York Times* articles on consumer credit from 1950 to 1995, they found that 60 percent were negative. The pessimistic tilt was even greater—topping 80 percent—when journalists generated their own stories rather than reporting on statements by politicians, business executives, or academics.

The evergreen story of people in debt becomes even sexier in an economic downturn, when debts inevitably get harder to pay. Witness a recent *Times* feature on "The Debt Trap," described as "a series about the surge in consumer debt and the lenders who made it possible." On the subject of credit, bad news sells.

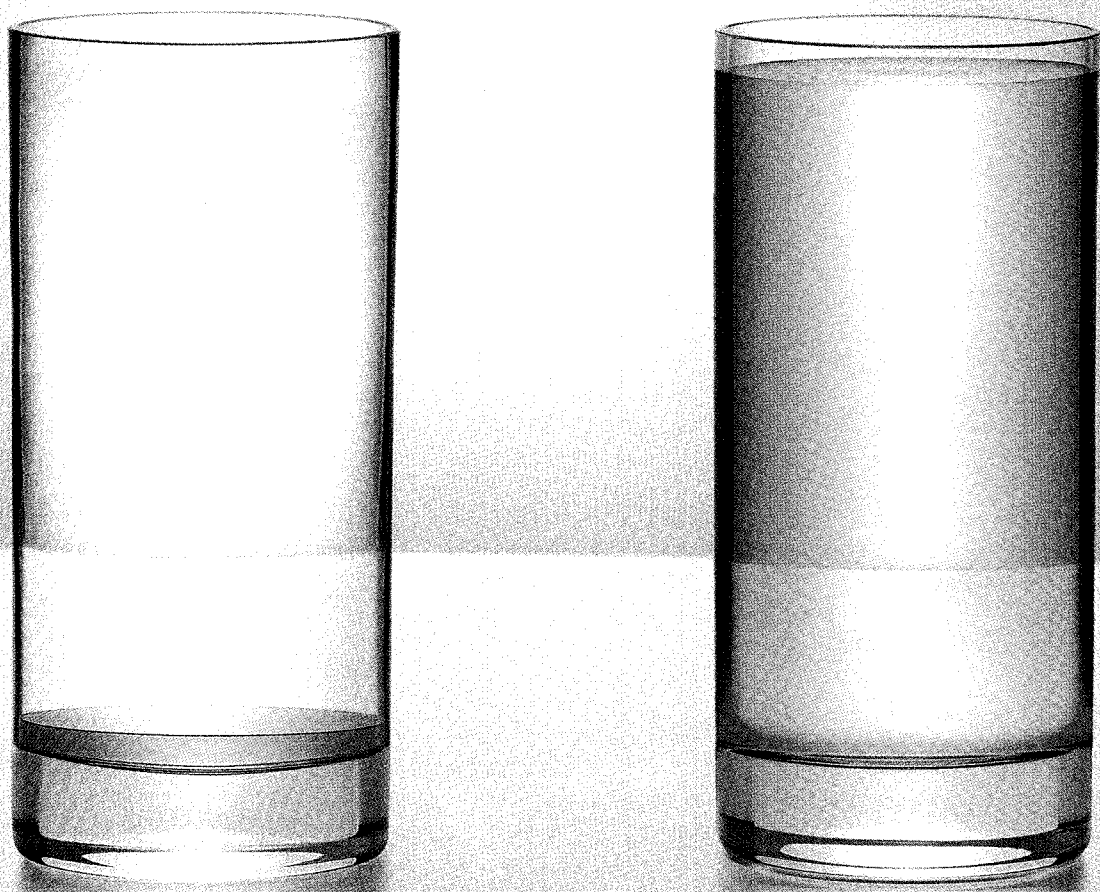
Certainly politicians think so. "Over the past 15 years, average household credit-card debt has tripled. The typical family is now nearly $10,000 in the red," said Barack Obama, decrying a "debt crisis" caused by "credit-card companies ... pushing [consumers] over the edge." At hearings last December, Senator Norm Coleman, the Minnesota Republican, declared, "This easy credit has gotten a lot of people in trouble." He could have said the same thing anytime in the past

PHILIP JAMES CORWIN/CORBIS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Simple Truth: Investment costs count

The lower the costs **the more you keep.**



Many investment firms call themselves low cost. But, the truth is, many of them charge about six times as much as Vanguard.* This can cost you thousands of dollars. For instance, over twenty years, if you invest $10,000 a year with an average return of 8% before expenses, you would keep about $58,000 more with the Vanguard fund! And the longer you invest, the greater the savings. It's your money. Keep more of it. Vanguard. The simple truth about investing.**

www.vanguard.com

Vanguard®

Visit www.vanguard.com, or call 877-527-4941, to obtain a prospectus, which includes investment objectives, risks, charges, expenses, and other information; read and consider it carefully before investing. Investments are subject to market risk.*Source: Lipper Inc. as of 12/31/2007. **Based on 2007 industry average expense ratio of 1.22% and Vanguard average expense ratio of 0.20%. Hypothetical example does not represent any particular investment. Simple Truth, The simple truth about investing, Vanguard, and the ship logo are trademarks of The Vanguard Group, Inc. ©2008 The Vanguard Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Vanguard Marketing Corporation, Distributor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

century and been applauded for it. Today's sluggish economy, home-equity-line-of-credit craze, and subprime-mortgage mess have amplified concerns about the general level of indebtedness. But while it's true that, thanks in large part to declining home prices, American homeowners hold less equity in their homes than they used to, the subprime meltdown is less a problem of consumer credit than of new financial instruments and the difficulty of tracking mortgages that have been sold, then broken up and repackaged into derivative securities. And on closer examination, what looks like "unprecedented" consumer indebtedness turns out to have ample precedent, as do the anxiety and moralizing that accompany it.

Studying "Middletown" in the 1920s, Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd deplored the "rise and spread of the dollar-down-and-so-much-per plan," which extended credit for such extravagances as cars, electric washing machines, and "$200 over-stuffed living-room suites ... to persons of whom frequently little is known as to their intention or ability to pay." In 1943, Jesse Rainsford Sprague, a defender of installment buying, nonetheless worried that the "temptations of easy credit" were luring young people to take out bank loans, rather than save, for vacations. Of one stenographer, he noted, "Had the young lady spent less on lip rouge and blood-red fingernail paint, she might have been in a position to pay cash for her holiday."

"As the result of the consumer credit explosion, the total private debt is certainly greater than the combined private debt of man throughout history. Never have so many owed so much," declared Hillel Black in *Buy Now, Pay Later*, published in 1961—more than a decade before using bank credit cards like MasterCard and Visa became common. Employing the big, scary numbers and dizzying examples typical of such critiques, Black elaborated:

> Currently about one hundred million Americans are participating in the buy-now, pay-later binge. Furthermore, they can, if they wish, do anything and everything on credit. Babies are being born on the installment plan, children go through college on time, even funerals are paid for on what the English quaintly call "the never never." Through debt people are buying hairpins, toothpaste, mink coats, girdles, tickets to baseball games, religious medallions, hi-fi equipment, safaris in Africa ... The result has been a consumer credit explosion that makes the population explosion seem small by comparison.

Black was right about the trend but wrong about its significance. The expansion of consumer credit is one of the great economic achievements of the past century. One institutional and technological innovation after another has made borrowing easier and cheaper for rich and poor alike. With each development have come fears—sometimes fueled by the unforeseen problems that inevitably accompany new practices—that *this* is the change that surely will lead to disaster. Yet a half century after Black's warnings, doomsday has not arrived, the "consumer-credit explosion" continues, and most consumers are much better off.

Gone are the up-front fees and intrusive interviews that used to be standard before taking out personal bank loans or establishing store credit. Except for those offering airline miles, most credit cards no longer have annual fees, while intense competition for new customers—think of all that annoying junk mail—has driven down the average interest rate, from 17.4 percent in 1992 to 13.1 percent in 2007. Today's consumer credit is flexible, convenient, impersonal, and (excluding car loans and mortgages) largely unsecured. With a credit card, you can rent a $40,000 automobile, buy goods online from complete strangers, finance a business, make ends meet while you're out of work, purchase a $5,000 wedding gown or a 10-cent photocopy—all without completing any forms or explaining yourself to anyone. And despite recent legal revisions, even bankruptcy is less painful than in the days of buying on time. If you default on your Visa bill, nobody comes to repossess your refrigerator or auction off your shoes. The biggest penalty you'll face is trouble getting future credit.

So why do we worry so much? For starters, the very success of consumer credit makes us uncomfortable. As borrowers, we may feel guilty about running up debt, anxious about making payments, and resentful of the constraints that old obligations (and old credit records) impose on our current choices. We may find it too easy to buy things we may later regret. In theory at least, we might prefer the days when paternalistic—or snobby—salesclerks checked our spending. "Our store manager's duty is to protect the buyer from unwise expenditures," wrote the retailer Julian Goldman in 1930.

> If a woman patron selects a gown or a wrap which is beyond her means, the store manager advises against the purchase. He knows, because the customer—conforming to the rule from which there is no deviation—has confidentially explained her circumstances in full detail ... The friendly, intimate, patient, personal interview is the key to our sales operation.

On second thought, why should your economic choices be the store manager's business? Practicality aside, anonymous databases and credit scores are a lot less intrusive.

When credit is cheaper to use and easier to arrange, people do use more of it. Hence those big, scary numbers, which grow along with the economy and the population. Contrary to a common perception, however, the people driving up the totals aren't primarily the financially strapped. They're "high-wealth consumers in their prime earning years," observes Andrew Kish, an economist at the Philadelphia Federal Reserve. Almost half the growth in debt between 1989 and 2004 (the most recent year for which data are available) came from the highest-income 20 percent of American households. (By contrast, the bottom 20 percent held about 3 percent of consumer debt—an increase from 1.9 percent—and accounted for a bare 4.5 percent of the growth.) If the rich are getting richer, it makes sense that they're also running up more debt. They can reasonably expect to pay it.

These affluent families also account for half of the outstanding consumer debt. So the $10,000 average that Obama cited isn't in fact owed by the "typical" family with an average income. That figure is calculated by spreading the much larger debts of the rich over the population as a whole. All by herself, Cindy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

McCain owed at least $200,000 on two American Express cards, according to her husband's campaign disclosure documents. That sounds terrifying until you realize that this wealthy woman pays her monthly AmEx bills in full.

Like those of Mrs. McCain, some of the credit-card balances included in government statistics aren't really debt at all. They're temporary charges for convenience's sake. Nowadays, credit cards are easier to use than cash—no fumbling for change while other shoppers wait impatiently behind you. Plus, companies offer rewards points and frequent-flier miles, and they give you a free float period if you pay your balance in full. So people who don't need to borrow money use their credit cards as a convenience, running up charges over the course of a month and paying everything off when the bill comes due. Whatever they owe on the day that debt statistics are collected goes into the total figures on consumer credit. This "convenience use" grew from about 6 percent of total credit-card debt in 1992 to 11 percent in 2001, calculates Kathleen Johnson, a Fed economist. That growth was two and a half times the growth rate for credit-card borrowing overall.

Some of the credit-card balances included in statistics aren't really debt at all. They're temporary charges for convenience's sake.

Of course, rich people and families who pay their bills every month aren't the only Americans with debts, and they certainly aren't the ones whose sad stories make the news. But financial innovations have also made lower-cost credit more available to lower-income people. Even those much-criticized payday loans cost less than pawnshop loans or bounced-check fees. Credit cards are cheaper still.

And credit-card companies have changed their lending policies in ways that make credit more accessible—but also more complicated. Credit-card prices used to be "high and simple," notes another study by the Philadelphia Fed. Everybody paid the same rate, regardless of credit risk. If you carried a balance but reliably paid your bills, you were subsidizing borrowers who weren't so dependable. But because the interest rate wasn't high enough to cover the riskiest potential customers, generally those with lower incomes or frequent unemployment, they were cut out of the credit-card market altogether.

Now, instead of charging everyone the same, companies adjust the interest rates according to customers' credit scores. They also charge special fees for late payments, purchases that exceed a credit limit, foreign-currency transactions, phone payments, and so forth. This structure makes it profitable to extend credit to high-risk borrowers, including those with low incomes. It's more inclusive, and arguably fairer, since it eliminates cross-subsidies. But it's also hard to explain. Hence Obama's complaints that credit-card contracts "have gone from being one page long a few decades ago to more than 30 pages long today."

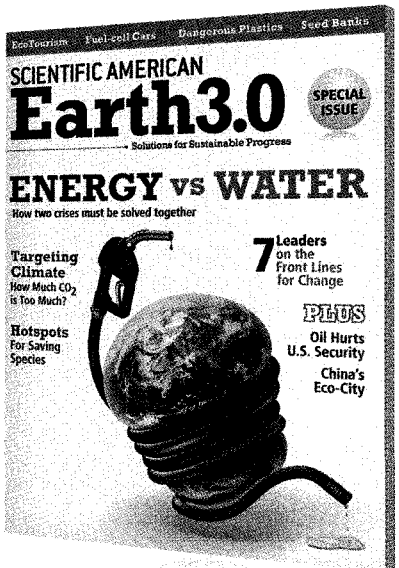
Of course, in the good old days of one-page contracts, politicians still decried easy credit and demanded more consumer information. Ever wonder why your credit-card agreement's easy-to-read "Schumer Box" specifies a minimum finance charge of, say, 50 cents? You've probably never thought twice about that charge, but back in the late 1980s, then-Congressman Charles Schumer and his colleagues thought that telling consumers the minimum charge was very important.

And back in those good old days, of course, some people still couldn't make their credit-card payments. Others worried that they'd never get out of debt. Still others felt guilty about buying luxuries even when they could afford them. Forms of credit may change, but credit anxiety, alas, does not.

Virginia Postrel is an Atlantic *contributing editor. She has a new blog at deepglamour.net.*

On Sale Now!

Join the discussion
of environment, economics and policy with a scientific perspective.



Scientific American Earth3.0:

- **Informs and elevates the public debate** about the environment and energy.
- **Clarifies the science and debunks the myths** surrounding hot button issues such as global warming.
- **Presents expert opinions from leaders** in science, technology, and industry.
- **Proposes short-term and long-term solutions** to complex issues surrounding economic and environmental sustainability.
- **Educates readers on choices** they can make to minimize impact on the environment.

LOOK FOR IT AT YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND ON SALE NOW

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He's just another seeker looking for answers. (Pay no attention to the video camera!)

An Atheist Walks Into a Bar ...

Bill Maher's spiritual journey

By James Parker

THE SEA OF FAITH ebbs further. Last year, as you remember, the atheists were philosophers, boffins, and rhetoricians. This year, they're comedians. In June, the blustery, flustery Lewis Black published his non-apologia, *Me of Little Faith*; a couple of weeks later, the death of George Carlin reminded everybody what a cranky old infidel *he* was. And now we have *Religulous*, an atheist-on-wheels documentary starring Bill Maher, host of HBO's *Real Time*. Spoiler alert: God dies at the end of this movie. In fact, he's dead all the way through. In fact, he was never born! But we're getting ahead of ourselves ...

The compact between unbelief and laughter is not new, of course: the human need for a takedown of the gods might even be comedy's most ancient warrant. I'd argue, though, that the higher atheist comedy was perfected only within the past 150 years, and right here in America. Indeed, if the first wave of 21st-century nonbelief, led by penetrative Oxonians like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins, had a distinctly mid-Victorian flavor to it, then this year's New Atheism has arrived at the era of Mark Twain.

Twain's atheism was famously posthumous. Electing to preserve his enormous public from the full force of his opinions, while he drew breath he kept his most God-hostile writing unpublished: the readers who had snapped up *Tom Sawyer* were not to know that he regarded the Beatitudes as a sequence of "immense sarcasms." But even as early as *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), in which Twain pleasure-cruises to the Holy Land in the company of religious tourists, his boisterous American philistinism was becoming a sort of metaphysic. The clueless pilgrims were innocents, of course, but innocent too after his fashion was the keen-eyed narrator—innocent of piety, innocent of cant, innocent (when you get right down to it) like Axl Rose in Guns N' Roses' "Out ta Get Me": "They're out ta get meee! / They won't catch meee! / Cuz I'm fuckin' *innocent*!"

COURTESY OF LIONSGATE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Close behind Twain came Ambrose Bierce, with the lethal compressions of his *Devil's Dictionary* ("Grave, n. A place in which the dead are laid to await the coming of the medical student"), and the rhetorical wrecking ball that was H. L. Mencken. The unearthing of Twain's hidden writings was a particular delight to the latter: "The true man emerges," he crowed in a 1917 piece for the *New York Evening Mail*. Twain's unbelief, for Mencken, was almost the fulfillment of his Americanness. "Mark was wholly of the soil," he proclaimed. Here the American comic atheist rises up: unencumbered, disenthralled, in rude existential health, not huddled palely in some priest-ridden twilight but soaking up the UV of reality. Fuckin' *innocent*, in a word.

So how do the new atheist comedians stack up against their predecessors? Lewis Black isn't nearly mean enough. He's too addled and dispersed onstage, his center of gravity is too high—his celebrated angry-ness vibrates out of his upper rib cage, rising to make his cheeks quake before flapping off loosely through the wrists. Worse, he confesses in *Me of Little Faith* to severe New Age tendencies: frequenting psychics, indulging in meditational mindblows. ("The vague shapes and shadowy figures I had been seeing turned into a mandala of spectacularly vivid colors.") George Carlin, on the other hand—now, he was a bit more like it. Casting, like Twain at his most cosmic, what might be called the satanic eye upon humanity, he reveled coldly in all manner of earthly weakness. And he got meaner as he got older: *Life Is Worth Losing*, one of his last specials for HBO, found him prowling in front of gravestones, with fake snow like dandruff all over the stage, eliciting from his audience not belly laughs but wary croaks of intellectual assent.

And then there's Bill Maher. *Religulous* takes the form of a travelogue, a grand tour of human folly; if the video camera had existed when Mencken was reporting on the Scopes trial, this is how he would have covered it. The style is similar to that of director Larry Charles's previous escapade, *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, with Maher replacing Sacha Baron Cohen as the provocateur. Like *Borat*, it thrives on instability and confrontation, with many of the scenes having that special about-to-be-bounced feel to them—heavy breathing at the edge of the frame, as we sense the impending intervention of the guard, the goon, the aggrieved citizen. Maher and Charles are ejected from the Vatican and denounced at the Dome of the Rock. In Temple Square, Salt Lake City, Mormon enforcers loom even as a passing freethinker cries out in solidarity ("Tell it like it is, Bill!"). All good clean seat-of-the-pants stuff. And the legwork is impressive too—in Amsterdam alone, Maher interviews two politicians, a Franciscan monk, a brace of Muslim homosexuals, and a man who has founded, though he seems a little unclear on its basic tenets, his own private cannabis-based religion.

Director and showboat make a nifty team. Charles is a character: formerly a writer on *Seinfeld* (the most atheistic show ever broadcast on network television), he tends to dress in the manner of a down-at-heel warlock or a disguised Balkan despot. We glimpse him occasionally at the rim of the action, shrouded in coats and wielding an enormous beard. Maher by contrast is all slickness and centrality—brilliantined, bespoke, with that pampered chuckle and long, connoisseurial nose. Together they are determined to get to the bottom of this religion thing: What *is* it? Why are we so *crazy* about it? What the *hell*? Heavy questions, but my sense is that audiences, having been mentally tenderized over the summer by the bozo profundities of *The Dark Knight*, are ready for this. (Did you hear the rapturous hush during Heath Ledger's sermon on chaos?)

The compact between unbelief and laughter isn't new: the human need for a takedown of the gods is comedy's most ancient warrant.

The jokes are almost too easy, as Maher acknowledges: barn door—shotgun—kaboom. At Speaker's Corner, the famous pressure valve of British democracy on the edge of London's Hyde Park, he dresses up as a bum and rantingly proclaims the truth of Scientology (Thetans! ... E-meters!). Medieval scenes ensue as the mob jeers and then crowns him, Feast of Fools–style, with a hat made of balloons. Half the time, all Charles needs to do is point the camera: the Institute for Science and Halacha, in Jerusalem, is a mad nest of creaking, puffing, Sabbath-circumventing machines—no commentary required. José Luis De Jesús Miranda, head of the International Ministry Growing in Grace and direct descendant of Christ, appears in a green suit against a yellow background, showing cocaine-white teeth. At the Holy Land Experience, in Orlando, Florida, a man in a House of Blues T-shirt aims a desultory camcorder at a staggering, bloodied Jesus; George Saunders couldn't have written it better.

Religulous should make the faithful wince. The average Christian—as if we needed reminding—makes a piss-poor apologist for his own faith. One might expect a doctrine as insolently extraordinary in its claims as Christianity to have produced some tip-top debaters, but oh dear, Maher has them on the ropes in seconds. We can perhaps forgive Steve Berg, ex–Jew for Jesus, for being temporarily unable to instruct Maher on the difference between believing in God and believing in Santa Claus. But what about Democratic Senator Mark Pryor of Arkansas, who hazards a half-assed defense of creationism ("Well, I believe the scientific community is still divided on that ...") before clamming up altogether, frozen-faced at his own idiocy? Even Dr. Francis Collins, the former director of the Human Genome Project, appears unprepared for the Maher assault. The nimblest controversialist in the movie, curiously, turns out to be the guy who dresses up as Jesus at the Holy Land Experience. Robed and sandaled in full Redeemer drag, he deals with Maher unflappably. The doctrine of the Trinity? "It's like water, Bill. It can be ice, steam, or water—three things in one!" ("A brilliant analogy," Maher later confesses.) Justifying

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the ways of God to man? "Like trying to explain the workings of a TV set to an *ant*." And when this husky Christ with the puppy-dog eyes begins to speak of the "God-sized hole" in Bill Maher, even Bill looks a little worried.

Can an atheist go on a spiritual journey? Maher was raised Catholic, with a Jewish mother. He interviews her for his movie: Religion, she says, "only told you good things. Or so I thought." "But it's so shamelessly invented!" he complains. "Well," she concedes, "we can say that *now*." In tantalizing glimpses of autobiography, Maher reveals that as late as age 40 (he is 52), he was still "making deals" with God. So what happened? Standing on the baked stones of Megiddo, snorting at the Second Coming, he seems fully formed—as secure in his American irony as Twain or any of them. But what formed him, exactly?

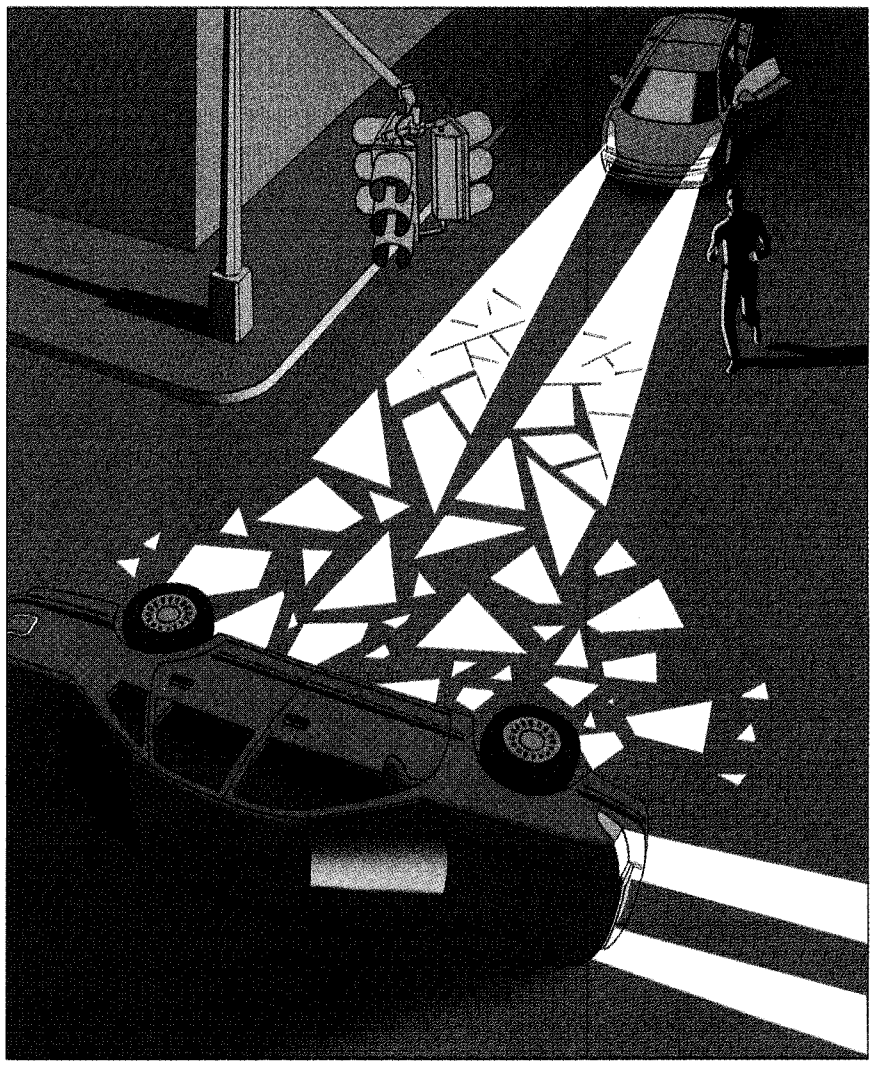
I like Maher best when he's bringing his own brand of acidulous biblical witness to bear. Reminding the glossily appareled Jeremiah Cummings, the head of the Worldwide International Campaign for Christ, that Saint Paul traveled with only the shirt on his back, he asks, "Should I assume that this is the only $2,000 suit you own?" To John Westcott, of the gay-conversion outfit Exchange Ministries, he submits the fact that Jesus had precisely nothing to say about homosexuality. Most stirringly, when several large working-class men at a roadside truckers chapel not only decline to beat him up but instead offer a sincere prayer that his questions will be answered, Maher thanks them for being "Christlike, and not just Christian." After moments like this, the movie's ending—in which Maher bellows antireligious anathemas ("Grow up or die!") over mushroom clouds and distant boomings of Nietzschean dynamite—seems a little heavy-metal.

Being a manipulatively liberal sort of polemic, *Religulous* will doubtless be compared with the work of Michael Moore. The film it's closest to, however, is the much-scorned *Expelled*—a work of creationist propaganda, starring Ben Stein, that was released earlier this year and seen primarily by journalists and cranks. Both movies feature a laconic/comedic narrator, a series of unintentionally self-satirizing interviewees, a sprinkling of "experts," and a concluding sequence that is orchestral and declamatory. Both make use of vintage footage and slapstick sound effects. Maher's is much better, but formally they differ only in that *Expelled* operates out of a central, completely loony metaphor—that science and faith have been divided by a "Berlin Wall" of materialist ideology—and *Religulous* does not. (Its makers, we might say, are constitutionally unmetaphorical.)

Ours is an age between ages, a halfway house whose symptoms are detectable everywhere. The plastic fork, fast food's chief instrument, has so degenerated that it can no longer perform the stern office of a fork but instead bends like a stage prop when you try to get something on the end of it. The Yellow Pages continues to arrive with a loyal thump on the doorstep, despite the fact that it is going directly into the recycling bin. And what we believe in, generally speaking, is a wishy-washy snooze-button humanism. To this last debility, no sharper corrective currently exists than the American comic atheist. He energizes the secular man, and puts the believer on his mettle. I don't happen to agree with him—that certain things should modestly withdraw before the peashooter of the intellect is not, to my mind, proof of their nonexistence. I'm for the leap of faith. But I'm grateful that he's out there, alive and well and pointing a pitiless camera—our aboriginal exploder of idols, bless him. ■

James Parker is an Atlantic *correspondent.*

GALLERY LIGHTS *by Guy Billout*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's the first Gulf War, not a Peter Watkins movie—but it's exactly the sort of moment his films foreshadowed.

ABBAS/MAGNUM PHOTOS

He Saw It Coming

The forgotten filmmaker who anticipated our modern media madness

By Michael Hirschorn

THE FILMMAKER Peter Watkins is legendarily unknown. His movies are virtually never shown, except at rare cinephile screenings, museum retrospectives, and lefty campus events. Over the past few years, most of his 14 films have dribbled out on DVD, but until a screenwriter friend turned me on to him recently, I had no clue who he was. When I expressed amazement at the uncanny way his films, most of them dating back to the '60s and '70s, presage the contemporary cultural and political landscape—from Fox News to *The Daily Show*, from reality TV to the coverage of the Iraq War—my friend responded, "Now you know the secret source. All things come from Watkins. All."

Watkins specializes in historical and current-affairs re-creations, but his real subject has always been the media—and on that subject he is a startlingly current filmmaker, even though almost a decade has passed since his last film. To the degree that he is known for anything, it is for a 50-minute film he made in 1965 called *The War Game*, which was underwritten by the BBC, then buried for 20 years, most likely at the behest of 10 Downing Street. A fictional account of a nuclear war's consequences for the United Kingdom, *The War Game* tracks the conflict from its first horrifying impact on the county of Kent, through to the spread of disease and starvation, and finally to the breakdown of civil order and the imposition of quarantine and martial law. The BBC, in justifying its refusal to air the film, stated: "The effect of the film has been judged ... too horrifying for the medium of broadcasting."

The film was incendiary not merely because it showed the unshowable—that the then–Cold War era could yield a hot war for which England was uniquely unprepared—but because the whole thing was presented in documentary form. *The War Game* intercuts fake news footage of the disaster with apparently real-life quotations from scientists, bishops, and other authority figures whose fatuous reassurances ("In the next world war, I believe that both sides

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could stop before the ultimate destruction of cities so that both sides could retire for a period of ... post-attack recuperation, in which World Wars Four to Eight could be prepared") stand in absurd counterpoint to the apocalypse unfolding before our eyes. (Watkins was four years ahead of Monty Python, and decades ahead of Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, in ruthlessly mocking gasbagish expert commentary—only he didn't think it was quite so hilarious.) This wasn't an attempt to perpetrate a *War of the Worlds*–type hoax; instead, it was a deep, unerring analysis of how we use media to anesthetize ourselves against uncomfortable truths.

Watkins's films don't just posit that we are being lied to; they show exactly how. His first professional film, *Culloden* (1964), deploys his faux-documentary skills in the service of historical deconstruction, restaging the slaughter of thousands of Scottish Highlanders who fought under the Jacobite pretender Prince Charles against the larger, better-organized, and better-armed English forces in 1746. A tale of mass slaughter and ethnic cleansing, *Culloden* is leavened only by an adrenaline-fueled British historian who watches the bloodletting from behind a stone wall and comments on events ("This is incredible ... The rebels are being literally blown apart!"), much as '60s newscasters reported on the West's attempts at post-colonial pacification. The resonances with the mythologization of the American Civil War are equally uncanny: among Watkins's targets is the long-standing depiction of the defeated "Bonnie Prince Charlie" as a tragic hero, rather than, as *Culloden* portrays him, a blithering, self-involved amateur who allowed his men to die in the name of a dynastic feud they barely understood.

Watkins's later films ratchet up the intensity of his media critique, dropping the contemporary press into wildly anachronistic environments. In his last film, the six-hour (!), French-language *La Commune (Paris 1871)*, rival networks cover the events of that March as if they're fodder for your local news, complete with man-in-the-street interviews ("I've got a message for the bourgeois. They're gonna have a headache 'cos we're here to kill 'em") and expert commentary from bow-tied men a stutter step away from the ex-generals who fanned out across the airwaves in the months after the 2003 Iraq invasion, rationalizing the fiasco thousands of miles away.

Like a Centre Pompidou of cinema, Watkins is forever laying bare the artifice. Fiction and nonfiction merge: non-actors improvise roles in fictional accounts of factual events (the effect is very reality-TV); and the contrivance inherent in any media narrative is exposed as Watkins shows the cameras, the sets, his directorial technique. His endlessly recursive gambits serve as a metatextual critique of how fact and fiction are just different ways to impose narrative—and yet they never seem like academic posing; indeed, they carry an amazing emotional wallop.

Watkins was decades ahead of Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert in ruthlessly mocking gasbagish commentary—except he didn't think it was quite so hilarious.

It helps that he's able to extract remarkable performances from nonprofessionals. In *La Commune*, the actors, many residents of working-class neighborhoods not dissimilar from the ones that bred the Communards, break character to discuss their roles. In *Punishment Park*, a 1970 faux-documentary loosely inspired by the trial of the Chicago Seven, young activists who bear more than a passing similarity to the likes of Abbie Hoffman and Bobby Seale improvise their way through a story that's chillingly apposite to the age of Guantánamo and other black-box prisons. Shot in the style of much of the Vietnam War coverage of the time (shaky handheld cameras rushing through the underbrush, de-centered framing, panting newsmen), the movie follows two groups of prisoners who are allowed to race through the California desert in the hope of reaching an American flag 53 miles away, shadowed by county troopers and other uniformed goons. Ostensibly a "National Network" TV-news account of an alternative-sentencing program for political dissidents, *Park* gets great mileage out of the way the vacant, macho police types and government officials emasculate the media observers, who are left sputtering at an injustice they can do nothing to stop. (Hilariously, the officials have set up a catering tent in the desert—a poor man's Doha.)

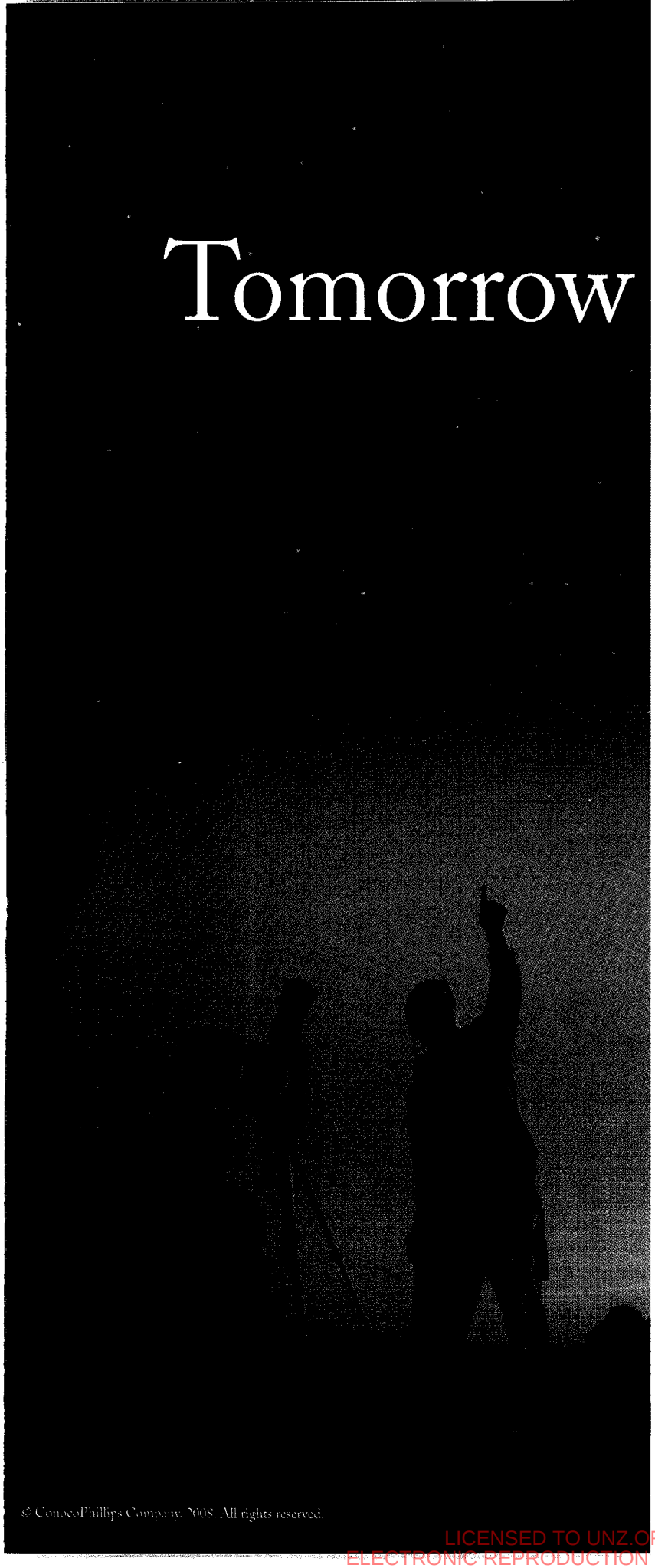
But *Park* also helps clarify why Watkins isn't more widely known. His *Village Voice*–circa 1975 politics, which make parts of the film seem as dated as the most pretentious Lina Wertmüller, are at once sentimental and punitively moralistic—as if continuing in your bourgeois existence after watching one of his films is a form of ethical suicide. Nobody likes a didact. Or a martyr: Watkins reacted to his travails with the BBC like a delicate flower, too sensitive for this world. The director, now 72, repeatedly pursued self-exile: to Sweden, Lithuania, and Canada. Featured in a major retrospective in Toronto in 2004, he refused to attend after a *Globe and Mail* essay that called him a "genius" also took issue with his politics. Stunts like these, and his allegedly shirty interactions with potential financial backers, have made it easy for the industry to find excuses not to support his work.

But the world his early films anticipated is the world we inhabit now. Like no filmmaker before or since, Watkins captures the constant manipulation and countermanipulation of the modern media, the push-pull of image projection and message management that has blurred the line between news and propaganda. His films are testaments to central truths of the current media environment: that mere logic is powerless against a brilliant projection of personality, that self-conscious "objectivity" and truth-telling are very different things, and that compelling narrative is impervious to facts. From the selling of the Iraq War to the selling of Sarah Palin, Watkins, like Orwell before him, shows how we are lied to, and how we lie to ourselves.

Michael Hirschorn is an Atlantic *contributing editor.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tomorrow begins today.



We're defined by what we pass on to the next generation. That's why ConocoPhillips is working to provide clean, efficient technology to turn coal into clean-burning fuel. Our process helps capture carbon and remove impurities that affect our air quality. And, because we believe we're responsible for finding long-term solutions for future generations, ConocoPhillips is exploring new sources of secure, stable energy. So we can pass on what matters . . . to the ones who matter most.

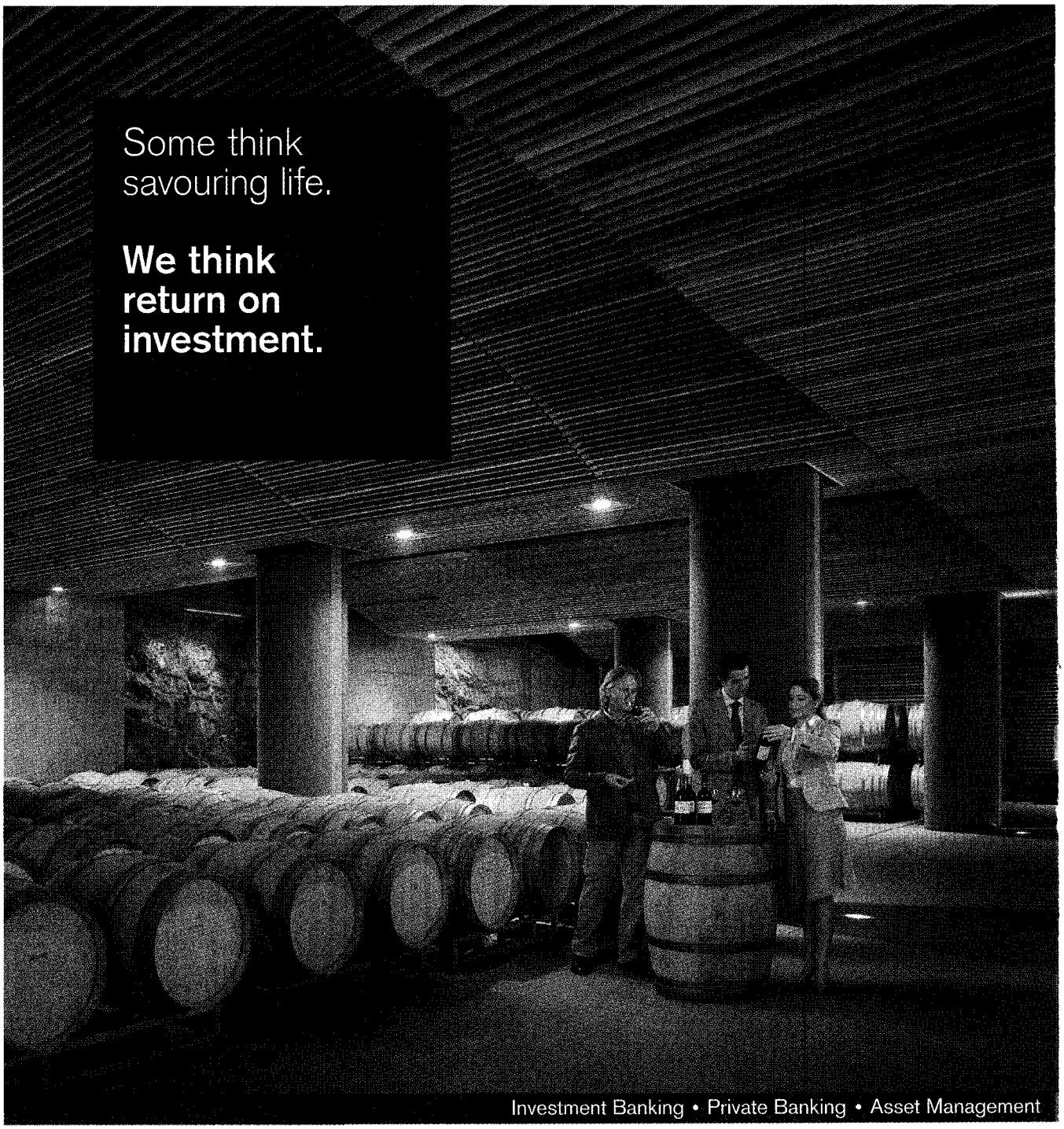
ConocoPhillips

Energy for tomorrow

www.conocophillips.com

© ConocoPhillips Company 2008. All rights reserved.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



At Credit Suisse, we develop integrated solutions –
for the benefit of our clients. By building on our
experience and expertise in Investment Banking,
Private Banking and Asset Management,
we help our clients realize new opportunities.
This has been our ambition since 1856.
www.credit-suisse.com

Thinking New Perspectives.

CREDIT SUISSE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"In some ways, blogging's gifts to our discourse make the skills of a good traditional writer much more valuable, not less. The torrent of blogospheric insights, ideas, and arguments places a greater premium on the person who can finally make sense of it all."

ANDREW SULLIVAN

From "Why I Blog," beginning on page 106

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SINCE HE COULD SPEAK, *Brandon, now 8, has insisted that he was meant to be a girl. This summer, his parents decided to let him grow up as one. His case, and a rising number of others like it, illuminates a heated scientific debate about the nature of gender—and raises troubling questions about whether the limits of child indulgence have been stretched too far.*

A BOY'S LIFE

By Hanna Rosin

THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER recorded that Brandon Simms was the first millennium baby born in his tiny southern town, at 12:50 a.m. He weighed eight pounds, two ounces and, as his mother, Tina, later wrote to him in his baby book, "had a darlin' little face that told me right away you were innocent." Tina saved the white knit hat with the powder-blue ribbon that hospitals routinely give to new baby boys. But after that, the milestones took an unusual turn. As a toddler, Brandon would scour the house for something to drape over his head—a towel, a doily, a moons-and-stars bandanna he'd snatch from his mother's drawer. "I figure he wanted something that felt like hair," his mother later guessed. He spoke his first full sentence at a local Italian restaurant: "I like your high heels," he told a woman in a fancy red dress. At home, he would rip off his clothes as soon as Tina put them on him, and instead try on something from her closet—a purple undershirt, lingerie, shoes. "He ruined all my heels in the sandbox," she recalls.

At the toy store, Brandon would head straight for the aisles with the Barbies or the pink and purple dollhouses. Tina wouldn't buy them, instead steering him to neutral toys: puzzles or building blocks or cool neon markers. One weekend, when Brandon was 2½, she took him to visit her 10-year-old cousin. When Brandon took to one of the many dolls in her huge collection—a blonde Barbie in a pink sparkly dress—Tina let him bring it home. He carried it everywhere, "even slept with it, like a teddy bear."

For his third Christmas, Tina bought Brandon a first-rate Army set—complete with a Kevlar hat, walkie-talkies, and a hand grenade. Both Tina and Brandon's father had served in the Army, and she thought their son might identify with the toys. A photo from that day shows him wearing a towel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brandon Simms at age 5 in a Disney princess costume

COURTESY OF THE FAMILY

around his head, a bandanna around his waist, and a glum expression. The Army set sits unopened at his feet. Tina recalls his joy, by contrast, on a day later that year. One afternoon, while Tina was on the phone, Brandon climbed out of the bathtub. When she found him, he was dancing in front of the mirror with his penis tucked between his legs. "Look, Mom, I'm a girl," he told her. "Happy as can be," she recalls.

"Brandon, God made you a boy for a special reason," she told him before they said prayers one night when he was 5, the first part of a speech she'd prepared. But he cut her off: "God made a mistake," he said.

Tina had no easy explanation for where Brandon's behavior came from. Gender roles are not very fluid in their no-stoplight town, where Confederate flags line the main street. Boys ride dirt bikes through the woods starting at age 5; local county fairs feature muscle cars for boys and beauty pageants for girls of all ages. In the Army, Tina operated heavy machinery, but she is no tomboy. When she was younger, she wore long flowing dresses to match her long, wavy blond hair; now she wears it in a cute, Renée Zellweger–style bob. Her husband, Bill (Brandon's stepfather), lays wood floors and builds houses for a living. At a recent meeting with Brandon's school principal about how to handle the boy, Bill aptly summed up the town philosophy: "The way I was brought up, a boy's a boy and a girl's a girl."

School had always complicated Brandon's life. When teachers divided the class into boys' and girls' teams, Brandon would stand with the girls. In all of his kindergarten and first-grade self-portraits—"I have a pet," "I love my cat," "I love to play outside"—the "I" was a girl, often with big red lips, high heels, and a princess dress. Just as often, he drew himself as a mermaid with a sparkly purple tail, or a tail cut out from black velvet. Late in second grade, his older stepbrother, Travis, told his fourth-grade friends about Brandon's "secret"—that he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dressed up at home and wanted to be a girl. After school, the boys cornered and bullied him. Brandon went home crying and begged Tina to let him skip the last week.

Since he was 4, Tina had been taking Brandon to a succession of therapists. The first told her he was just going through a phase; but the phase never passed. Another suggested that Brandon's chaotic early childhood might have contributed to his behavior. Tina had never married Brandon's father, whom she'd met when they were both stationed in Germany. Twice, she had briefly stayed with him, when Brandon was 5 months old and then when he was 3. Both times, she'd suspected his father of being too rough with the boy and had broken off the relationship. The therapist suggested that perhaps Brandon overidentified with his mother as the protector in the family, and for a while, this theory seemed plausible to Tina. In play therapy, the therapist tried to get Brandon to discuss his feelings about his father. She advised Tina to try a reward system at home. Brandon could earn up to $21 a week for doing three things: looking in the mirror and saying "I'm a boy"; not dressing up; and not wearing anything on his head. It worked for a couple of weeks, but then Brandon lost interest.

Around the world, clinics that specialize in gender-identity disorder in children report an explosion in referrals over the past few years.

Tina recounted much of this history to me in June at her kitchen table, where Brandon, now 8, had just laid out some lemon pound cake he'd baked from a mix. She, Bill, Brandon, his half sister, Madison, and Travis live in a comfortable double-wide trailer that Bill set up himself on their half acre of woods. I'd met Tina a month earlier, and she'd agreed to let me follow Brandon's development over what turned out to be a critical few months of his life, on the condition that I change their names and disguise where they live. While we were at the table talking, Brandon was conducting a kind of nervous fashion show; over the course of several hours, he came in and out of his room wearing eight or nine different outfits, constructed from his costume collection, his mom's shoes and scarves, and his little sister's bodysuits and tights. Brandon is a gymnast and likes to show off splits and back bends. On the whole, he is quiet and a little somber, but every once in a while—after a great split, say—he shares a shy, crooked smile.

About a year and a half ago, Tina's mom showed her a Barbara Walters *20/20* special she'd taped. The show featured a 6-year-old boy named "Jazz" who, since he was a toddler, had liked to dress as a girl. Everything about Jazz was familiar to Tina: the obsession with girls' clothes, the Barbies, wishing his penis away, even the fixation on mermaids. At the age of 3, Jazz had been diagnosed with "gender-identity disorder" and was considered "transgender," Walters explained. The show mentioned a "hormone imbalance," but his parents had concluded that there was basically nothing wrong with him. He "didn't ask to be born this way," his mother explained. By kindergarten, his parents were letting him go to school with shoulder-length hair and a pink skirt on.

Tina had never heard the word *transgender*; she'd figured no other little boy on Earth was like Brandon. The show prompted her to buy a computer and Google "transgender children." Eventually, she made her way to a subculture of parents who live all across the country; they write in to listservs with grammar ranging from sixth-grade-level to professorial, but all have family stories much like hers. In May, she and Bill finally met some of them at the Trans-Health Conference in Philadelphia, the larger of two annual gatherings in the U.S. that many parents attend. Four years ago, only a handful of kids had come to the conference. This year, about 50 showed up, along with their siblings—enough to require a staff dedicated to full-time children's entertainment, including Jack the Balloon Man, Sue's Sand Art, a pool-and-pizza party, and a treasure hunt.

Diagnoses of gender-identity disorder among adults have tripled in Western countries since the 1960s; for men, the estimates now range from one in 7,400 to one in 42,000 (for women, the frequency of diagnosis is lower). Since 1952, when Army veteran George Jorgensen's sex-change operation hit the front page of the New York *Daily News*, national resistance has softened a bit, too. Former NASCAR driver J. T. Hayes recently talked to *Newsweek* about having had a sex-change operation. Women's colleges have had to adjust to the presence of "trans-men," and the president-elect of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association is a trans-woman and a successful cardiologist. But nothing can do more to normalize the face of transgender America than the sight of a 7-year-old (boy or girl?) with pink cheeks and a red balloon puppy in hand saying to Brandon, as one did at the conference:

"Are you transgender?"

"What's that?" Brandon asked.

"A boy who wants to be a girl."

"Yeah. Can I see your balloon?"

Around the world, clinics that specialize in gender-identity disorder in children report an explosion in referrals over the past few years. Dr. Kenneth Zucker, who runs the most comprehensive gender-identity clinic for youth in Toronto, has seen his waiting list quadruple in the past four years, to about 80 kids—an increase he attributes to media coverage and the proliferation of new sites on the Internet. Dr. Peggy Cohen-Kettenis, who runs the main clinic in the Netherlands, has seen the average age of her patients plummet since 2002. "We used to get calls mostly from parents who were concerned about their children being gay," says Catherine Tuerk, who since 1998 has run a support network for parents of children with gender-variant behavior, out of Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. "Now about 90 percent of our calls are from parents with some concern that their child may be transgender."

In breakout sessions at the conference, transgender men and women in their 50s and 60s described lives of heartache and rejection: years of hiding makeup under the mattress, estranged parents, suicide attempts. Those in their 20s and 30s conveyed a dedicated militancy: they wore nose rings and Mohawks, ate strictly vegan, and conducted heated debates about the definitions of *queer* and *he-she* and *drag queen*. But

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

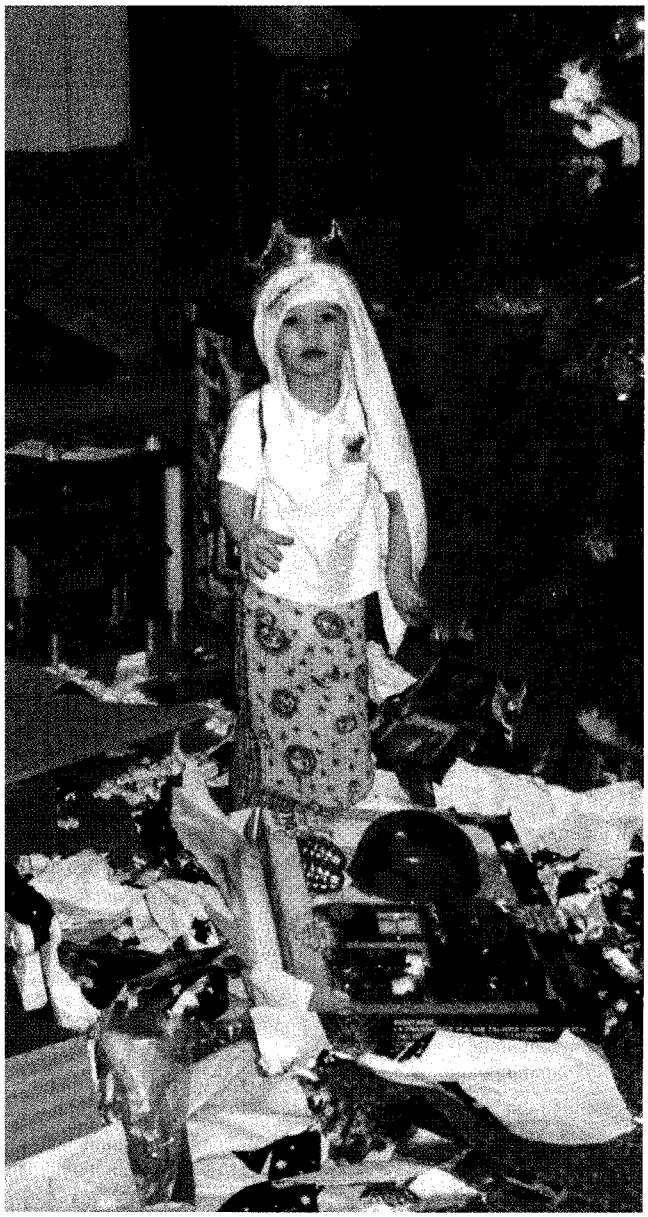
the kids treated the conference like a family trip to Disneyland. They ran around with parents chasing after them, fussing over twisted bathing-suit straps or wiping crumbs from their lips. They looked effortlessly androgynous, and years away from sex, politics, or any form of rebellion. For Tina, the sight of them suggested a future she'd never considered for Brandon: a normal life as a girl. "She could end up being a *mommy* if she wants, just like me," one adoring mother leaned over and whispered about her 5-year-old (natal) son.

It took the gay-rights movement 30 years to shift from the Stonewall riots to gay marriage; now its transgender wing, long considered the most subversive, is striving for suburban normalcy too. The change is fueled mostly by a community of parents who, like many parents of this generation, are open to letting even preschool children define their own needs. Faced with skeptical neighbors and school officials, parents at the conference discussed how to use the kind of quasi-therapeutic language that, these days, inspires deference: tell the school the child has a "medical condition" or a "hormonal imbalance" that can be treated later, suggested a conference speaker, Kim Pearson; using terms like *gender-identity disorder* or *birth defect* would be going too far, she advised. The point was to take the situation out of the realm of deep pathology or mental illness, while at the same time separating it from voluntary behavior, and to put it into the idiom of garden-variety "challenge." As one father told me, "Between all the kids with language problems and learning disabilities and peanut allergies, the school doesn't know who to worry about first."

A recent medical innovation holds out the promise that this might be the first generation of transsexuals who can live inconspicuously. About three years ago, physicians in the U.S. started treating transgender children with puberty blockers, drugs originally intended to halt precocious puberty. The blockers put teens in a state of suspended development. They prevent boys from growing facial and body hair and an Adam's apple, or developing a deep voice or any of the other physical characteristics that a male-to-female transsexual would later spend tens of thousands of dollars to reverse. They allow girls to grow taller, and prevent them from getting breasts or a period.

At the conference, blockers were the hot topic. One mother who'd found out about them too late cried, "The guilt I feel is overwhelming." The preteens sized each other up for signs of the magic drug, the way other teens might look for hip, expensive jeans: a 16-year-old (natal) girl, shirtless, with no sign of breasts; a 17-year-old (natal) boy with a face as smooth as Brandon's. "Is there anybody out there," asked Dr. Nick Gorton, a physician and trans-man from California, addressing a room full of older transsexuals, "who would not have taken the shot if it had been offered?" No one raised a hand.

After a day of sessions, Tina's mind was moving fast. "These kids look happier," she told me. "This is nothing we can fix. In his brain, in his *mind*, Brandon's a girl." With Bill, she started to test out the new language. "What's it they say? It's nothing wrong. It's just a medical condition, like diabetes or something. Just a variation on human behavior." She made an unlikely friend, a lesbian mom from Seattle named Jill who took Tina under her wing. Jill had a 5-year-old girl living as a boy and a future already mapped out. "He'll just basically be living life," Jill explained about her (natal) daughter. "I already legally changed his name and called all the parents at the school. Then, when he's in eighth grade, we'll take him to the [endocrinologist] and get the blockers, and no one will ever know. He'll just sail right through."



Brandon on Christmas Day 2002, wearing his mother's bandanna around his waist and a towel around his head

COURTESY OF THE FAMILY

"I live in a small town," Tina pleaded with Jill. "This is all just really *new*. I never even heard the word *transgender* until recently, and the shrinks just kept telling me this is fixable."

In my few months of meeting transgender children, I talked to parents from many different backgrounds, who had made very different decisions about how to handle their children. Many accepted the "new normalcy" line, and some did not. But they all had one thing in common: in such a loaded situation, with their children's future at stake, doubt about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BLUE TEC

The Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC clean-diesel SUVs are here. Extraordinarily powerful, luxurious and fuel-efficient, they represent the latest innovation from the company that pioneered diesel technology. Mercedes-Benz BlueTEC SUVs offer incredible driving range and a remarkable 20–30% better fuel economy than comparable gasoline models. It's an

Models shown 2009 GL 320 BlueTEC, 2009 R 320 BlueTEC and 2009 ML 320 BlueTEC. 2009 GL 320 BlueTEC and 2009 R 320 BlueTEC above shown in optional Iridium Silver metallic paint. 2009 ML 320 BlueTEC above shown

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

achievement that *Road & Track* noted on a trip in rural Vermont, calling the BlueTEC-powered ML's 27.5 mpg "impressive."* Likewise, on a test drive of its own, *Motor Trend* stated that it "returned an impressive average of 27.8 mpg during our cruise up the West Coast."** In a world full of compromise, it's one less compromise you have to make. **MBUSA.com/thinkblue**

in optional Alpine Rain metallic paint. Additional optional equipment may be featured. **Road & Track* 10/08. ***Motor Trend* 10/08. ©2008 Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC

For more information, call 1-800-FOR-MERCEDES, or visit MBUSA.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their choices did not serve them well. In Brandon's case, for example, doubt would force Tina to consider that if she began letting him dress as a girl, she would be defying the conventions of her small town, and the majority of psychiatric experts, who advise strongly against the practice. It would force her to consider that she would have to begin making serious medical decisions for Brandon in only a couple of years, and that even with the blockers, he would face a lifetime of hormone injections and possibly major surgery. At the conference, Tina struggled with these doubts. But her new friends had already moved past them.

"Yeah, it is fixable," piped up another mom, who'd been on the *20/20* special. "We call it the disorder we cured with a skirt."

In 1967, Dr. John Money launched an experiment that he thought might confirm some of the more radical ideas emerging in feminist thought. Throughout the '60s, writers such as Betty Friedan were challenging the notion that women should be limited to their prescribed roles as wives, housekeepers, and mothers. But other feminists pushed further, arguing that the whole notion of gender was a social construction, and easy to manipulate. In a 1955 paper, Money had written: "Sexual behavior and orientation as male or female does not have an innate, instinctive basis." We learn whether we are male or female "in the course of the various experiences of growing up." By the '60s, he was well-known for having established the first American clinic to perform voluntary sex-change operations, at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, in Baltimore. One day, he got a letter from the parents of infant twin boys, one of whom had suffered a botched circumcision that had burned off most of his penis.

What better rebuke to the *Our Bodies, Ourselves* era of feminism than the notion that even the body is dispensable, that the gender difference lies even deeper?

Money saw the case as a perfect test for his theory. He encouraged the parents to have the boy, David Reimer, fully castrated and then to raise him as a girl. When the child reached puberty, Money told them, doctors could construct a vagina and give him feminizing hormones. Above all, he told them, they must not waver in their decision and must not tell the boy about the accident.

In paper after paper, Money reported on Reimer's fabulous progress, writing that "she" showed an avid interest in dolls and dollhouses, that she preferred dresses, hair ribbons, and frilly blouses. Money's description of the child in his book *Sexual Signatures* prompted one reviewer to describe her as "sailing contentedly through childhood as a genuine girl." *Time* magazine concluded that the Reimer case cast doubt on the belief that sex differences are "immutably set by the genes at conception."

The reality was quite different, as *Rolling Stone* reporter John Colapinto brilliantly documented in the 2000 best seller *As Nature Made Him*. Reimer had never adjusted to being a girl at all. He wanted only to build forts and play with his brother's dump trucks, and insisted that he should pee standing up. He was a social disaster at school, beating up other kids and misbehaving in class. At 14, Reimer became so alienated and depressed that his parents finally told him the truth about his birth, at which point he felt mostly relief, he reported. He eventually underwent phalloplasty, and he married a woman. Then four years ago, at age 38, Reimer shot himself dead in a grocery-store parking lot.

Today, the notion that gender is purely a social construction seems nearly as outmoded as bra-burning or free love. Feminist theory is pivoting with the rest of the culture, and is locating the key to identity in genetics and the workings of the brain. In the new conventional wisdom, we are all prewired for many things previously thought to be in the realm of upbringing, choice, or subjective experience: happiness, religious awakening, cheating, a love of chocolate. Behaviors are fundamental unless we are chemically altered. Louann Brizendine, in her 2006 best-selling book, *The Female Brain*, claims that everything from empathy to chattiness to poor spatial reasoning is "hardwired into the brains of women." Dr. Milton Diamond, an expert on human sexuality at the University of Hawaii and long the intellectual nemesis of Money, encapsulated this view in an interview on the BBC in 1980, when it was becoming clear that Money's experiment was failing: "Maybe we really have to think ... that we don't come to this world neutral; that we come to this world with some degree of maleness and femaleness which will transcend whatever the society wants to put into [us]."

Diamond now spends his time collecting case studies of transsexuals who have a twin, to see how often both twins have transitioned to the opposite sex. To him, these cases are a "confirmation" that "the biggest sex organ is not between the legs but between the ears." For many gender biologists like Diamond, transgender children now serve the same allegorical purpose that David Reimer once did, but they support the opposite conclusion: they are seen as living proof that "gender identity is influenced by some innate or immutable factors," writes Melissa Hines, the author of *Brain Gender*.

This is the strange place in which transsexuals have found themselves. For years, they've been at the extreme edges of transgressive sexual politics. But now children like Brandon are being used to paint a more conventional picture: before they have much time to be shaped by experience, before they know their sexual orientation, even in defiance of their bodies, children can know their gender, from the firings of neurons deep within their brains. What better rebuke to the *Our Bodies, Ourselves* era of feminism than the notion that even the body is dispensable, that the hard nugget of difference lies even deeper?

In most major institutes for gender-identity disorder in children worldwide, a psychologist is the central figure. In the United States, the person intending to found "the first major academic research center," as he calls it, is Dr. Norman Spack, an endocrinologist who teaches at Harvard Medical School and is committed to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Give your old 401(k) the attention it needs.

A T. Rowe Price SmartChoice Rollover℠ makes it easy.

If you have an old 401(k), it's not enough to just leave it alone and wait for your savings to grow. It takes constant management over the years. With a T. Rowe Price SmartChoice Rollover IRA, it's easy to make sure your retirement savings gets the care and attention it deserves.

- Just choose the no-load Retirement Fund closest to the year you turn 65, from the year 2005–2055.
- Retirement Funds invest in a mix of low-cost T. Rowe Price funds that we manage and adjust over the years, so you don't have to.
- Our Investment Guidance Specialists can help you through the rollover process step by step. They can even handle most of the paperwork for you.

troweprice.com/smart | 1.877.648.0609

T.RowePrice®
INVEST WITH CONFIDENCE

Request a prospectus or a briefer profile; each includes investment objectives, risks, fees, expenses, and other information that you should read and consider carefully before investing. Important factors to consider when planning for retirement include your expected expenses, sources of income, and available assets. Before investing in one of these funds, weigh your objectives, time horizon, and risk tolerance. The funds invest in many underlying funds and are exposed to the risks of different areas of the market.

T. Rowe Price Investment Services, Inc., Distributor.

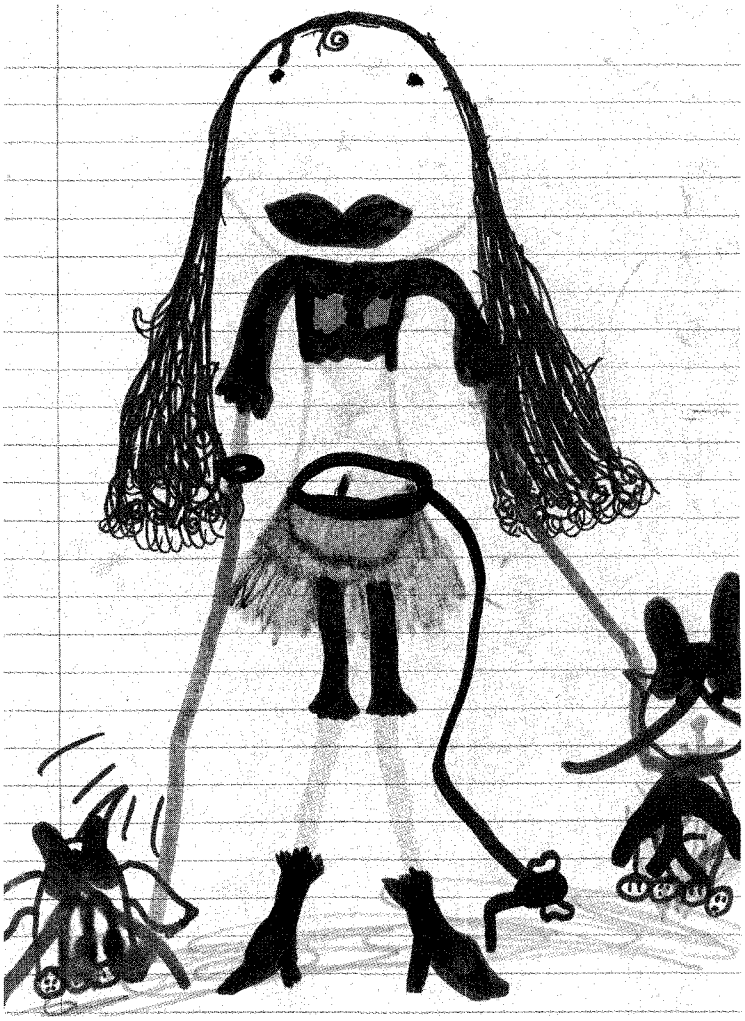
IRARSC077197

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a hormonal fix. Spack works out of a cramped office at Children's Hospital in Boston, where the walls are covered with diplomas and notes of gratitude scrawled in crayons or bright markers ("Thanks, Dr. Spack!!!"). Spack is bald, with a trim beard, and often wears his Harvard tie under his lab coat. He is not confrontational by nature, but he can hold his own with his critics: "To those who say I am interrupting God's work, I point to Leviticus, which says, 'Thou shalt not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor'"—an injunction, as he sees it, to prevent needless suffering.

Spack has treated young-adult transsexuals since the 1980s, and until recently he could never get past one problem: "They are never going to fail to draw attention to themselves." Over the years, he'd seen patients rejected by families, friends, and employers after a sex-change operation. Four years ago, he heard about the innovative use of hormone blockers on transgender youths in the Netherlands; to him, the drugs seemed like the missing piece of the puzzle.

The problem with blockers is that parents have to begin making medical decisions for their children when the children are quite young. From the earliest signs of puberty, doctors have about 18 months to start the blockers for ideal results. For girls, that's usually between ages 10 and 12; for boys, between 12 and 14. If the patients follow through with cross-sex hormones and sex-change surgery, they will be permanently sterile, something Spack always discusses with them. "When you're talking to a 12-year-old, that's a heavy-duty conversation," he said in a recent interview. "Does a kid that age really think about fertility? But if you don't start treatment, they will always have trouble fitting in."



"Me and My Pets," a self-portrait drawn by Brandon in kindergarten

COURTESY OF THE FAMILY

When Beth was 11, she told her mother, Susanna, that she'd "rather be dead" than go to school anymore as a girl. (The names of all the children and parents used as case studies in this story are pseudonyms.) For a long time, she had refused to shower except in a bathing suit, and had skipped out of health class every Thursday, when the standard puberty videos were shown. In March 2006, when Beth, now Matt, was 12, they went to see Spack. He told Matt that if he went down this road, he would never biologically have children.

"I'll adopt!" Matt said.

"What is most important to him is that he's comfortable in who he is," says Susanna. They left with a prescription—a "godsend," she calls it.

Now, at 15 and on testosterone, Matt is tall, with a broad chest and hairy legs. Susanna figures he's the first trans-man in America to go shirtless without having had any chest surgery. His mother describes him as "happy" and "totally at home in his masculine body." Matt has a girlfriend; he met her at the amusement park where Susanna works. Susanna is pretty sure he's said something to the girl about his situation, but knows he hasn't talked to her parents.

Susanna imagines few limitations in Matt's future. Only a minority of trans-men get what they call "bottom" surgery, because phalloplasty is still more cosmetic than functional, and the procedure is risky. But otherwise? Married? "Oh, yeah. And his career prospects will be good because he gets very good grades. We envision a kind of family life, maybe in the suburbs, with a good job." They have "no fears" about the future, and "zero doubts" about the path they've chosen.

Blockers are entirely reversible; should a child change his or her mind about becoming the other gender, a doctor can stop the drugs and normal puberty will begin. The Dutch clinic has given them to about 70 children since it started the treatment, in 2000; clinics in the United States and Canada have given them to dozens more. According to Dr. Peggy Cohen-Kettenis, the psychologist who heads the Dutch clinic, no case of a child stopping the blockers and changing course has yet been reported.

This suggests one of two things: either the screening is excellent, or once a child begins, he or she is set firmly on the path to medical intervention. "Adolescents may consider this step a guarantee of sex reassignment," wrote Cohen-Kettenis, "and it could make them therefore less rather than more inclined to engage in introspection." In the Netherlands, clinicians try to guard against this with an extensive diagnostic protocol, including testing and many sessions "to confirm

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

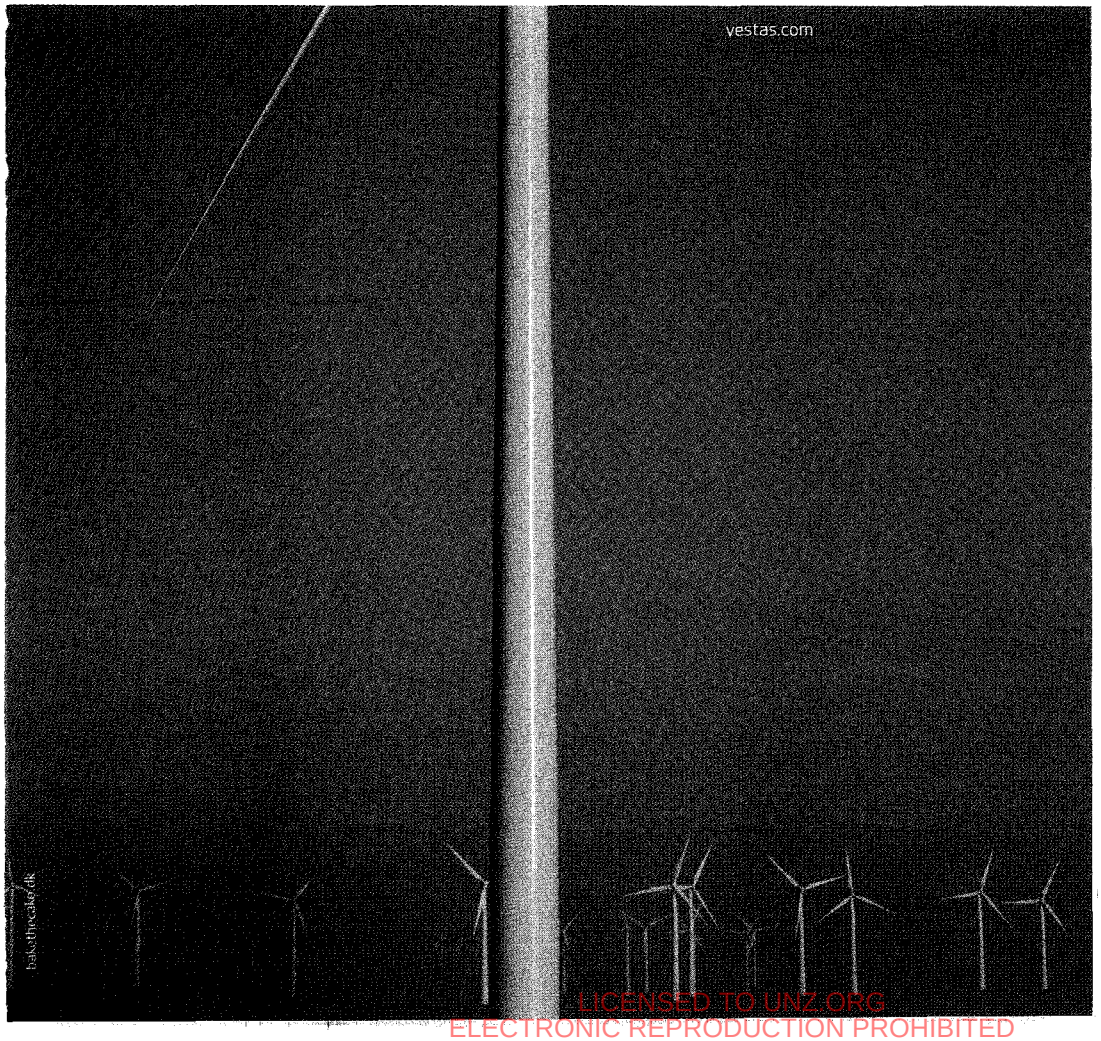
No. 1 in Modern Energy

Believe in the Wind

Wind is an important source of homegrown American energy. And with soaring energy prices and global climate change, this clean natural resource holds more promise today than ever before.

How far can we go with wind? A lot further than you might think. We know, because Vestas is a global leader in technologies that use wind to generate electricity. And wind is the sole focus of our business.

America has some of the world's most abundant wind resources, and Vestas is here to help harness them. Believe in the wind.



Vestas

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the desire for treatment is very persistent," before starting the blockers.

Spack's clinic isn't so comprehensive. A part-time psychologist, Dr. Laura Edwards-Leeper, conducts four-hour family screenings by appointment. (When I visited during the summer, she was doing only one or two a month.) But often she has to field emergency cases directly with Spack, which sometimes means skipping the screening altogether. "We get these calls from parents who are just frantic," she says. "They need to get in immediately, because their child is about to hit puberty and is having serious mental-health issues, and we really want to accommodate that. It's like they've been waiting their whole lives for this and they are just desperate, and when they finally get in to see us ... it's like a rebirth."

The organizers had planned a pool party for that night, and Tina had come to a decision: Brandon would wear exactly the kind of bathing suit he'd always wanted.

Spack's own conception of the psychology involved is uncomplicated: "If a girl starts to experience breast budding and feels like cutting herself, then she's probably transgendered. If she feels immediate relief on the [puberty-blocking] drugs, that confirms the diagnosis," he told *The Boston Globe*. He thinks of the blockers not as an addendum to years of therapy but as "preventative" because they forestall the trauma that comes from social rejection. Clinically, men who become women are usually described as "male-to-female," but Spack, using the parlance of activist parents, refers to them as "affirmed females"—"because how can you be a male-to-female if really you were always a female in your brain?"

For the transgender community, *born in the wrong body* is the catchphrase that best captures this moment. It implies that the anatomy deceives where the brain tells the truth; that gender destiny is set before a baby takes its first breath. But the empirical evidence does not fit this argument so neatly. Milton Diamond says his study of identical transgender twins shows the same genetic predisposition that has been found for homosexuality: if one twin has switched to the opposite sex, there is a 50 percent chance that the other will as well. But his survey has not yet been published, and no one else has found nearly that degree of correlation. Eric Vilain, a geneticist at UCLA who specializes in sexual development and sex differences in the brain, says the studies on twins are mixed and that, on the whole, "there is no evidence of a biological influence on transsexualism yet."

In 1995, a study published in *Nature* looked at the brains of six adult male-to-female transsexuals and showed that certain regions of their brains were closer in size to those of women than of men. This study seemed to echo a famous 1991 study about gay men, published in *Science* by the neuroscientist Simon LeVay. LeVay had studied a portion of the hypothalamus that governs sexual behavior, and he discovered that in gay men, its size was much closer to women's than to straight men's; his findings helped legitimize the notion that homosexuality is hardwired. But in the transsexual study, the sample size was small, and the subjects had already received significant feminizing hormone treatments, which can affect brain structure.

Transsexualism is far less common than homosexuality, and the research is in its infancy. Scattered studies have looked at brain activity, finger size, familial recurrence, and birth order. One hypothesis involves hormonal imbalances during pregnancy. In 1988, researchers injected hormones into pregnant rhesus monkeys; the hormones seemed to masculinize the brains but not the bodies of their female babies. "Are we expecting to find some biological component [to gender identity]?" asks Vilain. "Certainly I am. But my hunch is, it's going to be mild. My hunch is that sexual orientation is probably much more hardwired than gender identity. I'm not saying [gender identity is] entirely determined by the social environment. I'm just saying that it's much more malleable."

Vilain has spent his career working with intersex patients, who are born with the anatomy of both sexes. He says his hardest job is to persuade the parents to leave the genitals ambiguous and wait until the child has grown up, and can choose his or her own course. This experience has influenced his views on parents with young transgender kids. "I'm torn here. I'm very ambivalent. I know [the parents] are saying the children are born this way. But I'm still on the fence. I consider the child my patient, not the parents, and I don't want to alleviate the anxiety of the parents by surgically fixing the child. We don't know the long-term effects of making these decisions for the child. We're playing God here, a little bit."

Even some supporters of hormone blockers worry that the availability of the drugs will encourage parents to make definitive decisions about younger and younger kids. This is one reason why doctors at the clinic in the Netherlands ask parents not to let young children live as the other gender until they are about to go on blockers. "We discourage it because the chances are very high that your child will not be a transsexual," says Cohen-Kettenis. The Dutch studies of their own patients show that among young children who have gender-identity disorder, only 20 to 25 percent still want to switch gender at adolescence; other studies show similar or even lower rates of persistence.

The most extensive study on transgender boys was published in 1987 as *The "Sissy Boy Syndrome" and the Development of Homosexuality*. For 15 years, Dr. Richard Green followed 44 boys who exhibited extreme feminine behaviors, and a control group of boys who did not. The boys in the feminine group all played with dolls, preferred the company of girls to boys, and avoided "rough-and-tumble play." Reports from their parents sound very much like the testimonies one reads on the listservs today. "He started ... cross-dressing when he was about 3," reported one mother. "[He stood] in front of the mirror and he took his penis and he folded it under, and he said, 'Look, Mommy, I'm a girl,'" said another.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Green expected most of the boys in the study to end up as transsexuals, but nothing like that happened. Three-fourths of the 44 boys turned out to be gay or bisexual (Green says a few more have since contacted him and told him they too were gay). Only one became a transsexual. "We can't tell a pre-gay from a pre-transsexual at 8," says Green, who recently retired from running the adult gender-identity clinic in England. "Are you helping or hurting a kid by allowing them to live as the other gender? If everyone is caught up in facilitating the thing, then there may be a hell of a lot of pressure to remain that way, regardless of how strongly the kid still feels gender-dysphoric. Who knows? That's a study that hasn't found its investigator yet."

Out on the sidewalk in Philadelphia, Tina was going through Marlboro after Marlboro, stubbing them out half-smoked against city buildings. The conference's first day had just ended, with Tina asking another mom, "So how do you know if one of these kids stays that way or if he changes?" and the mom suggesting she could wait awhile and see.

"Wait? Wait for what?" Tina suddenly said to Bill. "He's already waited six years, and now I don't care about any of that no more." Bill looked worried, but she threw an Army phrase at him: "Suck it up and drive on, soldier."

The organizers had planned a pool party for that night, and Tina had come to a decision: Brandon would wear exactly the kind of bathing suit he'd always wanted. She had spotted a Macy's a couple of blocks away. I walked with her and Bill and Brandon into the hush and glow, the headless mannequins sporting golf shorts with $80 price tags. They quietly took the escalator one floor up, to the girls' bathing-suit department. Brandon leaped off at the top and ran to the first suit that caught his eye: a teal Hannah Montana bikini studded with jewels and glitter. "Oh, I love this one," he said.

"So that's the one you want?" asked Tina.

Brandon hesitated. He was used to doing his cross-dressing somewhat furtively. Normally he would just grab the shiniest thing he saw, for fear his chance would evaporate. But as he came to understand that both Tina and Bill were on board, he slowed down a bit. He carefully looked through all the racks. Bill, calm now, was helping him. "You want a one-piece or two-piece?" Bill asked. Tina, meanwhile, was having a harder time. "I'll get used to it," she said. She had tried twice to call Brandon "she," Tina suddenly confessed, but "it just don't sound right," she said, her eyes tearing.

Brandon decided to try on an orange one-piece with polka dots, a sky-blue-and-pink two-piece, and a Hawaiian-print tankini with a brown background and pink hibiscus flowers. He went into a dressing room and stayed there a long, long time. Finally, he called in the adults. Brandon had settled on the least showy of the three: the Hawaiian print with the brown background. He had it on and was shyly looking in the mirror. He wasn't doing backflips or grinning from ear to ear; he was still and at peace, gently fingering the price tag. He mentioned that he didn't want to wear the suit again until he'd had a chance to wash his feet.

At the pool party, Brandon immediately ran into a friend he'd made earlier, the transgender boy who'd shared his balloon puppy. The pool was in a small room in the corner of a hotel basement, with low ceilings and no windows. The echoes of 70 giddy children filled the space. Siblings were there, too, so it was impossible to know who had been born a boy and who a girl. They were all just smooth limbs and wet hair and an occasional slip that sent one crying to his or her mother.

Bill sat next to me on a bench and spilled his concerns. He was worried about Tina's stepfather, who would never accept this. He was worried that Brandon's father might find out and demand custody. He was worried about Brandon's best friend, whose parents were strict evangelical Christians. He was worried about their own pastor, who had sternly advised them to take away all of Brandon's girl-toys and girl-clothes. "Maybe if we just pray hard enough," Bill had told Tina.

Brandon raced by, arm in arm with his new friend, giggling. Tina and Bill didn't know this yet, but Brandon had already started telling the other kids that his name was Bridget, after the pet mouse he'd recently buried ("My beloved Bridget. Rest With the Lord," the memorial in his room read). The comment of an older transsexual from Brooklyn who'd sat behind Tina in a session earlier that day echoed in my head. He'd had his sex-change operation when he was in his 50s, and in his wild, wispy wig, he looked like a biblical prophet, with breasts. "You think you have troubles now," he'd yelled out to Tina. "Wait until next week. Once you let the genie out of the bottle, she's not going back in!"

Dr. Kenneth Zucker has been seeing children with gender-identity disorder in Toronto since the mid-'70s, and has published more on the subject than any other researcher. But lately he has become a pariah to the most-vocal activists in the American transgender community. In 2012, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*—the bible for psychiatric professionals—will be updated. Many in the transgender community see this as their opportunity to remove gender-identity disorder from the book, much the same way homosexuality was delisted in 1973. Zucker is in charge of the committee that will make the recommendation. He seems unlikely to bless the condition as psychologically healthy, especially in young children.

I met Zucker in his office at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, where piles of books alternate with the Barbies and superheroes that he uses for play therapy. Zucker has a white mustache and beard, and his manner is somewhat Talmudic. He responds to every question with a methodical three-part answer, often ending by climbing a chair to pull down a research paper he's written. On one of his file cabinets, he's tacked up a flyer from a British parents' advocacy group that reads: "Gender dysphoria is increasingly understood ... as having biological origins," and describes "small parts of the brain" as "progressing along different pathways." During the interview, he took it down to make a point: "In terms of empirical data, this is not true. It's just dogma, and I've never liked dogma. Biology is not destiny."

In his case studies and descriptions of patients, Zucker usually explains gender dysphoria in terms of what he calls "family noise": neglectful parents who caused a boy to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

overidentify with his domineering older sisters; a mother who expected a daughter and delayed naming her newborn son for eight weeks. Zucker's belief is that with enough therapy, such children can be made to feel comfortable in their birth sex. Zucker has compared young children who believe they are meant to live as the other sex to people who want to amputate healthy limbs, or who believe they are cats, or those with something called ethnic-identity disorder. "If a 5-year-old black kid came into the clinic and said he wanted to be white, would we endorse that?" he told me. "I don't think so. What we would want to do is say, 'What's going on with this kid that's making him feel that it would be better to be white?' "

Young children, he explains, have very concrete reasoning; they may believe that if they want to wear dresses, they are girls. But he sees it as his job—and the parents'—to help them think in more-flexible ways. "If a kid has massive separation anxiety and does not want to go to school, one solution would be to let them stay home. That would solve the problem at one level, but not at another. So it is with gender identity." Allowing a child to switch genders, in other words, would probably not get to the root of the psychological problem, but only offer a superficial fix.

'You think you have troubles now,' an older transsexual yelled to Tina. 'Wait until next week. Once you let the genie out of the bottle, she's not going back in!'

Zucker calls his approach "developmental," which means that the most important factor is the age of the child. Younger children are more malleable, he believes, and can learn to "be comfortable in their own skin." Zucker says that in 25 years, not one of the patients who started seeing him by age 6 has switched gender. Adolescents are more fixed in their identity. If a parent brings in, say, a 13-year-old who has never been treated and who has severe gender dysphoria, Zucker will generally recommend hormonal treatment. But he considers that a fraught choice. "One has to think about the long-term developmental path. This kid will go through lifelong hormonal treatment to approximate the phenotype of a male and may require some kind of surgery and then will have to deal with the fact that he doesn't have a phallus; it's a tough road, with a lot of pain involved."

Zucker put me in touch with two of his success stories, a boy and a girl, now both living in the suburbs of Toronto. Meeting them was like moving into a parallel world where every story began the same way as those of the American families I'd met, but then ran in the opposite direction.

When he was 4, the boy, John, had tested at the top of the gender-dysphoria scale. Zucker recalls him as "one of the most anxious kids I ever saw." He had bins full of Barbies and Disney princess movies, and he dressed in homemade costumes. Once, at a hardware store, he stared up at the glittery chandeliers and wept, "I don't want to be a daddy! I want to be a mommy!"

His parents, well-educated urbanites, let John grow his hair long and play with whatever toys he preferred. But then a close friend led them to Zucker, and soon they began to see themselves as "in denial," recalls his mother, Caroline. "Once we came to see his behavior for what it was, it became painfully sad." Zucker believed John's behavior resulted from early-childhood medical trauma—he was born with tumors on his kidneys and had had invasive treatments every three months—and from his dependence during that time on his mother, who has a dominant personality.

When they reversed course, they dedicated themselves to the project with a thoroughness most parents would find exhausting and off-putting. They boxed up all of John's girl-toys and videos and replaced them with neutral ones. Whenever John cried for his girl-toys, they would ask him, "Do you think playing with those would make you feel better about being a boy?" and then would distract him with an offer to ride bikes or take a walk. They turned their house into a 1950s kitchen-sink drama, intended to inculcate respect for patriarchy, in the crudest and simplest terms: "Boys don't wear pink, they wear blue," they would tell him, or "Daddy is smarter than Mommy—ask him." If John called for Mommy in the middle of the night, Daddy went, every time.

When I visited the family, John was lazing around with his older brother, idly watching TV and playing video games, dressed in a polo shirt and Abercrombie & Fitch shorts. He said he was glad he'd been through the therapy, "because it made me feel happy," but that's about all he would say; for the most part, his mother spoke for him. Recently, John was in the basement watching the Grammys. When Caroline walked downstairs to say good night, she found him draped in a blanket, vamping. He looked up at her, mortified. She held his face and said, "You never have to be embarrassed of the things you say or do around me." Her position now is that the treatment is "not a cure; this will always be with him"—but also that he has nothing to be ashamed of. About a year ago, John carefully broke the news to his parents that he is gay. "You'd have to carefully break the news to me that you were straight," his dad told him. "He'll be a man who loves men," says his mother. "But I want him to be a happy man who loves men."

The girl's case was even more extreme in some ways. She insisted on peeing standing up and playing only with boys. When her mother bought her Barbies, she'd pop their heads off. Once, when she was 6, her father, Mike, said out of the blue: "Chris, you're a girl." In response, he recalls, she "started screaming and freaking out," closing her hand into a fist and punching herself between the legs, over and over. After that, her parents took her to see Zucker. He connected Chris's behavior to the early years of her parents' marriage; her mother had gotten pregnant and Mike had been resentful of having to marry her, and verbally abusive. Chris, Zucker told them, saw her mother as weak and couldn't identify with her. For four years, they saw no progress. When Chris turned 11 and other girls in school started getting their periods, her mother found her on the bed one night, weeping. She "said she wanted to kill herself," her mother told me. "She said, 'In my head, I've always been a boy.' "

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is tomorrow's energy right in front of us?

Where on earth could we find enough oil to power more than 60 million cars for 60 years? And enough natural gas to heat 160 million households for 60 years?

You might be surprised to learn that the answer is right here, in America – 116 billion barrels of oil and 651 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, just on federal lands.

But, as the saying goes, these vital domestic resources are often "so close, yet so far." Why? Because current government policies – a tangled mix of federal and state regulatory restrictions – put a large portion of these oil and natural gas resources, many on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), off-limits to production.

85% of lower 48 OCS acreage is off-limits to oil & natural gas development

In fact, the U.S. government estimates that there are 36 billion barrels of undiscovered technically recoverable oil on federal lands currently closed to development. New technological breakthroughs allow us to tap these resources, even in "ultra deep waters," while protecting fragile marine environments. Recently, oil and natural gas companies employed advanced technologies to discover vast amounts of new oil and natural gas in the Gulf of Mexico – resources beyond our technical reach just a few years ago.

The U.S. Department of Energy predicts America will need 19 percent more energy in 2030 than we used in 2006. Meeting this demand, and ensuring our future energy security, requires developing more energy from more sources, including our own oil and natural gas resources.

Oil and natural gas not only heat our homes and fuel transportation, they also provide the building blocks for everything from medicines to advanced communications equipment. And developing America's untapped energy resources means a stronger economy and more American jobs. That's real economic stimulus – and it would allow increased funding for federal, state and local government budgets.

Oil and natural gas make possible our unequaled quality of life. Ensuring such for future Americans will require policies that permit responsible, respectful access to America's plentiful domestic oil and natural gas resources. These valuable resources are within our reach. Let's work together to realize their potential.

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S
OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

© 2008 API

EnergyTomorrow.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But about a month after that, everything began to change. Chris had joined a softball team and made some female friends; her mother figured she had cottoned to the idea that girls could be tough and competitive. Then one day, Chris went to her mother and said, "Mom, I need to talk to you. We need to go shopping." She bought clothes that were tighter and had her ears pierced. She let her hair grow out. Eventually she gave her boys' clothes away.

Now Chris wears her hair in a ponytail, walks like a girl, and spends hours on the phone, talking to girlfriends about boys. Her mother recently watched her through a bedroom window as she was jumping on their trampoline, looking slyly at her own reflection and tossing her hair around. At her parents' insistence, Chris has never been to a support group or a conference, never talked to another girl who wanted to be a boy. For all she knew, she was the only person in the world who felt as she once had felt.

The week before I arrived in Toronto, the Barbara Walters special about Jazz had been re-aired, and both sets of parents had seen it. "I was aghast," said John's mother. "It really affected us to see this poor little peanut, and her parents just going to the teacher and saying 'He is a "she" now.' Why would you assume a 4-year-old would understand the ramifications of that?"

"We were shocked," Chris's father said. "They gave up on their kid too early. Regardless of our beliefs and our values, you look at Chris, and you look at these kids, and they have to go through a sex-change operation and they'll never look right and they'll never have a normal life. Look at Chris's chance for a happy, decent life, and look at theirs. Seeing those kids, it just broke our hearts."

Catherine Tuerk, who runs the support group for parents in Washington, D.C., started out as an advocate for gay rights after her son came out, in his 20s. She has a theory about why some parents have become so comfortable with the transgender label: "Parents have told me it's almost easier to tell others, 'My kid was born in the wrong body,' rather than explaining that he might be gay, which is in the back of everyone's mind. When people think about being gay, they think about sex—and thinking about sex and kids is taboo."

Tuerk believes lingering homophobia is partly responsible for this, and in some cases, she may be right. When Bill saw two men kissing at the conference, he said, "That just don't sit right with me." In one of Zucker's case studies, a 17-year-old girl requesting cross-sex hormones tells him, "Doc, to be honest, lesbians make me sick ... I want to be normal." In Iran, homosexuality is punishable by death, but sex-change operations are legal—a way of normalizing aberrant attractions.

Overall, though, Tuerk's explanation touches on something deeper than latent homophobia: a subconscious strain in American conceptions of childhood. You see it in the hyper-vigilance about "good touch" and "bad touch." Or in the banishing of Freud to the realm of the perverse. The culture seems invested in an almost Victorian notion of childhood innocence, leaving no room for sexual volition, even in the far future.

When Tuerk was raising her son, in the '70s, she and her husband, a psychiatrist, both fell prey to the idea that their son's gayness was somehow their fault, and that they could change it. These were the years when the child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim blamed cold, distant "refrigerator mothers" for everything from autism to schizophrenia in their children. Children, to Bettelheim, were messy, unhappy creatures, warped by the sins of their parents. Today's children are nothing like that, at least not in their parents' eyes. They are pure vessels, channeling biological impulses beyond their control—or their parents'. Their requests are innocent, unsullied by baggage or desire. Which makes it much easier to say yes to them.

Tuerk was thrilled when the pendulum swung from nurture toward nature; "I can tell you the exact spot where I was, in Chevy Chase Circle, when someone said the words to me: 'There's a guy in Baltimore, and he thinks people are born gay.'" But she now thinks the pendulum may have swung too far. For the minority who are truly transgender, "the sooner they get into the right clothes, the less they're going to suffer. But for the rest? I'm not sure if we're helping or hurting them by pushing them in this direction."

It's not impossible to imagine Brandon's life going in another direction. His early life fits neatly into a Zucker case study about family noise. Tina describes Brandon as "never leaving my side" during his early years. The diagnosis writes itself: father, distant and threatening; mother, protector; child overidentifies with strong maternal figure. If Tina had lived in Toronto, if she'd had the patience for six years of Dr. Zucker's therapy, if the therapy had been free, then who knows?

Yet Zucker's approach has its own disturbing elements. It's easy to imagine that his methods—steering parents toward removing pink crayons from the box, extolling a patriarchy no one believes in—could instill in some children a sense of shame and a double life. A 2008 study of 25 girls who had been seen in Zucker's clinic showed positive results; 22 were no longer gender-dysphoric, meaning they were comfortable living as girls. But that doesn't mean they were happy. I spoke to the mother of one Zucker patient in her late 20s, who said her daughter was repulsed by the thought of a sex change but was still suffering—she'd become an alcoholic, and was cutting herself. "I'd be surprised if she outlived me," her mother said.

When I was reporting this story, I was visibly pregnant with my third child. My pregnancy brought up a certain nostalgia for the parents I met, because it reminded them of a time when life was simpler, when a stranger could ask them whether their baby was a boy or a girl and they could answer straightforwardly. Many parents shared journals with me that were filled with anguish. If they had decided to let their child live as the other gender, that meant cutting off ties with family and friends who weren't supportive, putting away baby pictures, mourning the loss of the child they thought they had. It meant sending their child out alone into a possibly hostile world. If they chose the other route, it meant denying their child the things he or she most wanted, day after day, in the uncertain hope that one day, it would all pay off. In either case, it meant choosing a course on the basis of hazy evidence, and resolving to believe in it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

About two months after the conference, I visited Brandon again. On Father's Day, Tina had made up her mind to just let it happen. She'd started calling him "Bridget" and, except for a few slip-ups, "she." She'd packed up all the boy-clothes and given them to a neighbor, and had taken Bridget to JC Penney for a new wardrobe. When I saw her, her ears were pierced and her hair was just beginning to tickle her earlobes. "If it doesn't move any faster, I'll have to get extensions!" Tina said.

That morning, Tina was meeting with Bridget's principal, and the principal of a nearby school, to see if she could transfer. "I want her to be known as Bridget, not Bridget-who-used-to-be-Brandon." Tina had memorized lots of lines she'd heard at the conference, and she delivered them well, if a little too fast. She told the principals that she had "pictures and medical documentation." She showed them a book called *The Transgender Child*. "I thought we could fix it," she said, "but gender's in your brain." Brandon's old principal looked a little shell-shocked. But the one from the nearby school, a young woman with a sweet face and cropped curly hair, seemed more open. "This is all new to me," she said. "It's a lot to learn."

The week before, Tina had gone to her mother's house, taking Bridget along. Bridget often helps care for her grandmother, who has lupus; the two are close. After lunch, Bridget went outside in a pair of high heels she'd found in the closet. Tina's stepfather saw the child and lost it: "Get them damned shoes off!" he yelled.

"Make me," Bridget answered.

Then the stepfather turned to Tina and said, "You're ruining his fucking life," loud enough for Bridget to hear.

Tina's talk with Karen, the mother of Bridget's best friend, Abby, hadn't gone too smoothly, either. Karen is an evangelical Christian, with an anti-gay-marriage bumper sticker on her white van. For two years, she'd picked up Brandon nearly every day after school, and brought him over to play with Abby. But that wasn't going to happen anymore. Karen told Tina she didn't want her children "exposed to that kind of thing." "God doesn't make mistakes," she added.

Bridget, meanwhile, was trying to figure it all out—what she could and couldn't do, where the limits were. She'd always been a compliant child, but now she was misbehaving. Her cross-dressing had amped up; she was trying on makeup, and demanding higher heels and sexier clothes. When I was over, she came out of the house dressed in a cellophane getup, four-inch heels, and lip gloss. "It's like I have to teach her what's appropriate for a girl her age," says Tina.

Thursdays, the family spends the afternoon at a local community center, where both Bridget and her little sister, Madison, take gymnastics. She'd normally see Abby there; the two of them are in the same class and usually do their warm-up together, giggling and going over their day. On the car ride over, Bridget was trying to navigate that new relationship, too.

"Abby's not my best friend anymore. She hits me. But she's really good at drawing."

She'd always been a compliant child, but now she was misbehaving. Her cross-dressing had amped up; she was demanding higher heels and sexier clothes.

"Well, don't you go hitting nobody," Tina said. "Remember, sticks and stones."

When they arrived at the center and opened the door, Abby was standing right there. She looked at Bridget/Brandon. And froze. She turned and ran away. Madison, oblivious, followed her, yelling, "Wait for us!"

Bridget sat down on a bench next to Tina. Although they were miles from home, she'd just seen a fourth-grade friend of her stepbrother's at the pool table, and she was nervous.

"Hey, we need to work on this," said Tina. "If anybody says anything, you say, 'I'm not Brandon. I'm Bridget, his cousin from California. You want to try it?' "

"No. I don't want to."

"Well, if someone keeps it up, you just say, 'You're crazy.' "

Tina had told me over the phone that Brandon was easily passing as a girl, but that wasn't really true, not yet. With his hair still short, he looked like a boy wearing tight pink pants and earrings. This meant that for the moment, everywhere in this small town was a potential land mine. At the McDonald's, the cashier eyed him suspiciously: "Is that Happy Meal for a boy or a girl?" At the playground, a group of teenage boys with tattoos and their pants pulled low down did a double take. By the evening, Tina was a nervous wreck. "Gosh darn it! I left the keys in the car," she said. But she hadn't. She was holding them in her hand.

After gymnastics, the kids wanted to stop at the Dairy Queen, but Tina couldn't take being stared at in one more place. "Drive-thru!" she yelled. "And I don't want to hear any more whining from you."

On the quiet, wooded road leading home, she could finally relax. It was cool enough to roll down the windows and get some mountain air. After high school, Tina had studied to be a travel agent; she had always wanted to just "work on a cruise ship or something, just go, go, go." Now she wanted things to be easy for Brandon, for him to disappear and pop back as Bridget, a new kid from California, new to this town, knowing nobody. But in a small town, it's hard to erase yourself and come back as your opposite.

Maybe one day they would move, she said. But thinking about that made her head hurt. Instead of the future, she drifted to the past, when things were easier.

"Remember that camping trip we took once, Brandon?" she asked, and he did. And together, they started singing one of the old camp songs she'd taught him.

> Smokey the Bear, Smokey the Bear,
> Howlin' and a-prowlin' and a-sniffin' the air.
> He can find a fire before it starts to flame.
> That's why they call him Smokey,
> That's how he got his name.

"You remember that, Brandon?" she asked again. And for the first time all day, they seemed happy.

Hanna Rosin is an Atlantic *contributing editor and the author of* God's Harvard: A Christian College on a Mission to Save America *(2007).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

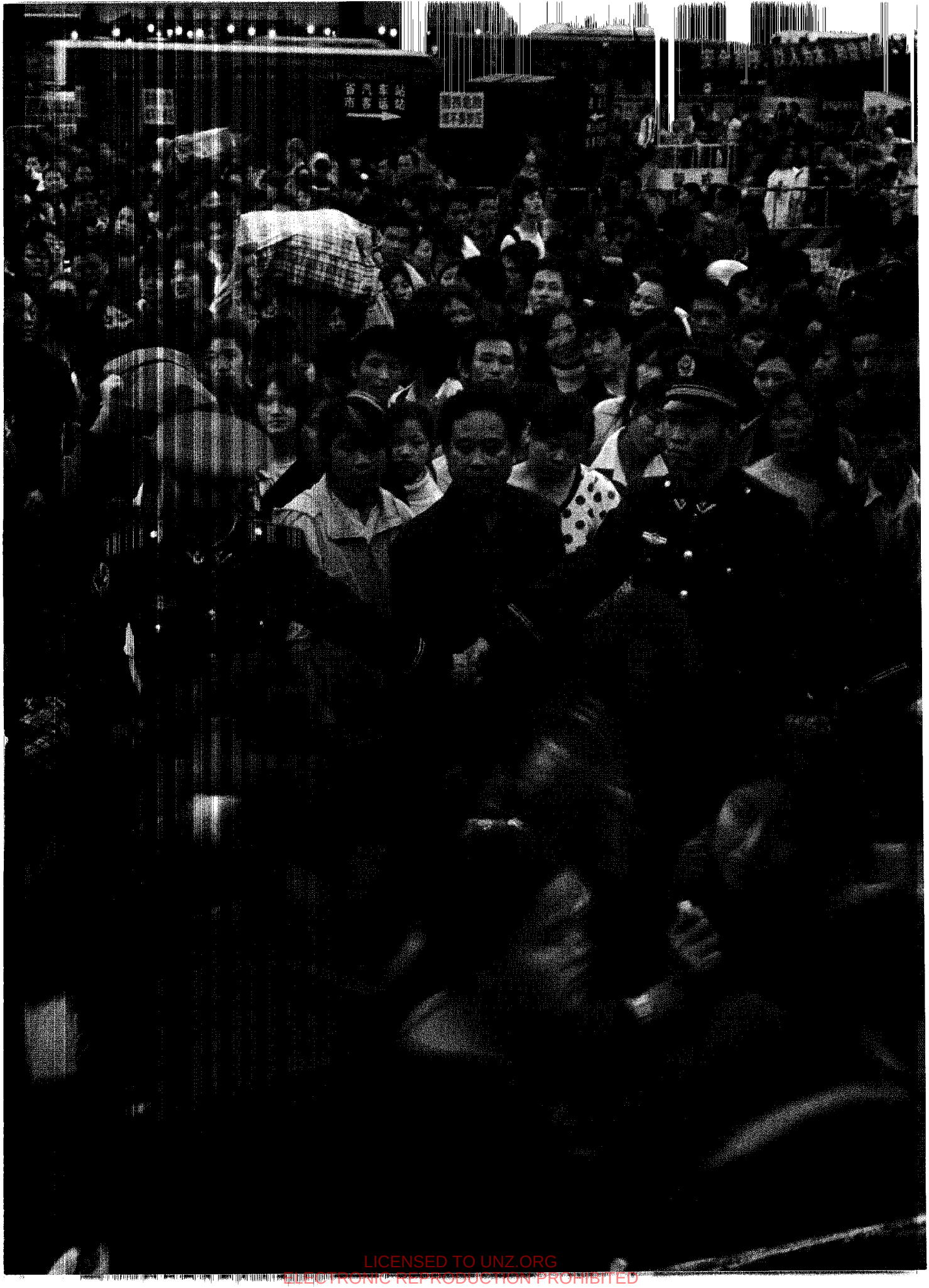
AS CHINA PREPARES *to take its place as the world's dominant power, it faces confounding obstacles: its insularity and sheer stupidity in delivering the genuine good news about its own progress.*

THEIR OWN WORST ENEMY

By James Fallows

AFTER TWO YEARS in China, there are still so many things I can't figure out. Is it really true, as is always rumored but never proved, that the Chinese military runs most of the pirate-DVD business—which would in turn explain why that business is so difficult to control? At what point in Chinese culture did it become mandatory for business and political leaders to dye away every gray hair, so that gatherings of powerful men in their 50s and up are seas of perfect pitch-black heads? How can corporations and government agencies invest huge sums producing annual reports and brochures and advertisements in English, yet manifestly never bother to ask a native English speaker whether they've made some howler-style mistake? (Last year, a museum in Shanghai put on a highly publicized exhibit of photos from the Three Gorges Dam area. In front, elegant banners said in six-foot-high letters THE THREE GEORGES.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why do Beijing taxi drivers almost never have maps—and almost always have their own crates or buckets filling the trunks of their cars when they pick up baggage-laden passengers at the airport? I could go on.

But here is by far the most important of these mysteries: How can official China possibly do such a clumsy and self-defeating job of presenting itself to the world? China, like any big, complex country, is a mixture of goods and bads. But I have rarely seen a governing and "communications" structure as consistent in hiding the good sides and highlighting the bad.

I come across examples every day, but let me start with a publicly reported event. Early this year, I learned of a tantalizing piece of news about an unpublicized government plan for the Beijing Olympics. In a conversation with someone involved in the preparations, I learned of a brilliant scheme to blunt potential foreign criticism during the Games. The Chinese government had drawn up a list of hotels, work spaces, Internet cafés, and other places where visiting journalists and dignitaries were most likely to use the Internet. At those places, and only there, normal "Great Firewall" restrictions would be removed during the Olympics. The idea, as I pointed out in an article about Chinese controls ("'The Connection Has Been Reset,'" March *Atlantic*), was to make foreigners happier during their visit—and likelier to tell friends back home that, based on what they'd seen on their own computer screens, China was a much more open place than they had heard. This was subtle influence of the sort that would have made strategists from Sun Tzu onward proud.

According to a report last year, most people in China considered their country very 'trustworthy.' Most people outside China thought the country was not trustworthy at all.

The scheme displayed a sophisticated insight into outsiders' mentality and interests. It recognized that foreigners, especially reporters, like being able to poke around unsupervised, try harder to see anything they're told is out-of-bounds, and place extra weight on things they believe they have found without guidance. By saying nothing at all about this plan, the government could let influential visitors "discover" how freely information was flowing in China, with all that that implied. In exchange, the government would give up absolutely nothing. If visiting dignitaries, athletes, and commentators searched for a "Free Tibet" site or found porn that is usually banned in China, what's the harm? They had seen worse back at home.

When the Olympics actually started, things did not go exactly according to plan. As soon as journalists began checking in at their Olympic hotels, they began complaining about all the Web sites they couldn't reach. Chinese officials replied woodenly that this was China, and established Chinese procedures must be obeyed: Were the arrogant foreigners somehow suggesting that they were too good to comply with China's sovereign laws? Unlike the brilliant advance scheme, all this was reported.

After huddling with officials from the International Olympic Committee, who had been touting China's commitment to free information flow during the Games, the Chinese government quietly reversed its stance. For a few days, controls seemed to have been lifted for Internet users in many parts of Beijing—in my apartment, far from the main Olympic areas, I could get to usually blocked sites, like any BlogSpot blog, without using a Virtual Private Network (VPN). Eventually the controls came back on for everyone except users in the special Olympic areas. By then the Chinese government had turned a potential PR masterstroke into a fiasco. Now what the foreign visitors could tell friends back home was that they knew firsthand that China's Internet is indeed censored, that its government could casually break its promise of free information flow during the Games, and that foreign complaints could bully it back into line.

From the outside, this blunder might not seem noteworthy or surprising, given the dim image of the Chinese government generally conveyed in the Western press. It might not even be thought of as a blunder—rather, as a sign that the government had, for once, been caught trying to sneak out of its commitments and repress whatever it could. To me it was puzzling because of its sheer stupidity: Did they think none of the 10,000 foreign reporters would notice? Did they think there was *anything* to gain?

The government's decision was more complicated but even more damaging in another celebrated Olympics case, this one the most blatantly Orwellian: the offer to open three areas for "authorized protests" during the Olympics—followed by the rejection of every single request to hold a demonstration, and the arrest of several people who asked. It's true that even if China is wide-open in many ways, public demonstrations that might lead to organized political opposition are, in effect, taboo. But why guarantee international criticism by opening the zones in the first place? Who could have thought this was a good idea?

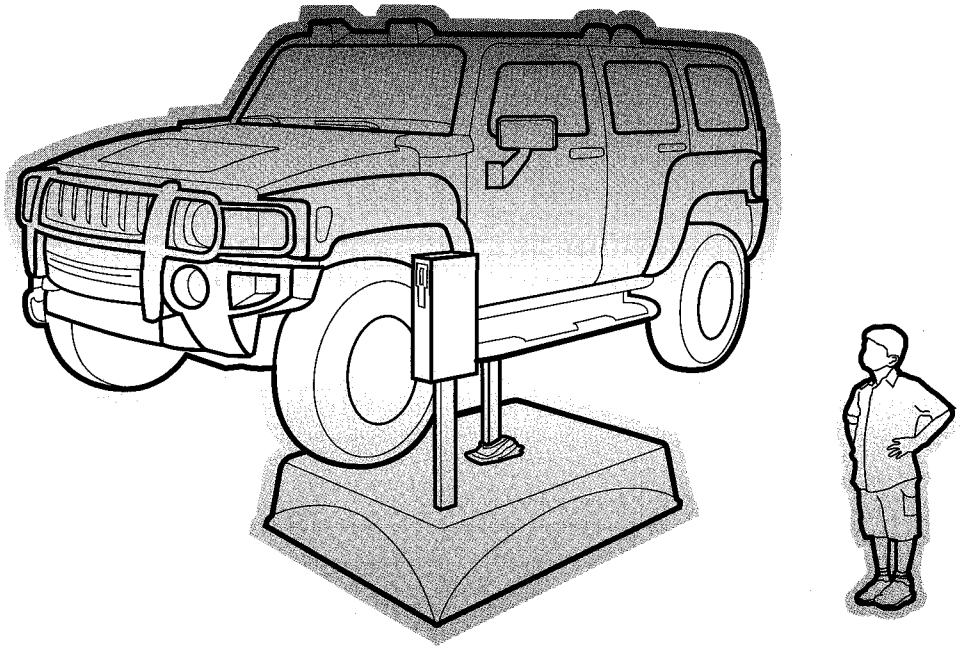
Such self-inflicted damage occurs routinely, without the pressure of the Olympics. Whenever a Chinese official or the state-run Xinhua News Agency puts out a release in English calling the Dalai Lama "a jackal clad in Buddhist monk's robes" or a man "with a human face and the heart of a beast," it only builds international sympathy for him and members of his "splittist clique." A special exhibit about Tibet in Beijing's Cultural Palace of Minorities this year illustrated the blessings of China's supervision by showing photos of grinning Tibetans opening refrigerators full of beer, and of new factories including a cement plant in Lhasa. Such basic material improvements are huge parts of the success story modern China has to tell. But the exhibit revealed total naïveté in dealing with the complaints about religious freedom made by the "Dalai clique." It was as if the government had hired *The Onion* as its image consultant.

Let's assume for the sake of argument that reporters are viewed with suspicion or loathing by the political or business leaders they cover. That doesn't keep governments in many countries from understanding the crass value of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cultivating the press. Anyone with experience in neighboring South Korea, Taiwan, or Japan knows how skillful their business-governmental establishments are at mounting "charm offensives" to make influential foreigners feel cosseted and part of the team. Official China sometimes launches a successful charm offensive on visiting dignitaries. When it comes to dealing with foreign reporters—who after all will do much to shape the outside world's view of their country—Chinese spokesmen and spinners barely seem to try. Maybe I'm biased; my application for a journalist visa to China was turned down because of "uncertainty" about what I might be looking for in the country (I have been here on other kinds of visas). But China's press policy seems similar to, say, Dick Cheney's (if without the purposeful stiff-arming) and reflects the same view—that scrutiny from the Western press is not really necessary. I'm convinced that usually these are blunders rather than calculated manipulation.

GALLERY HUMMER RIDE *by Paul Sahre*



This is inept on China's part. Why do I consider it puzzling? Because of two additional facts I would not have guessed before coming to China: it's a better country than its leaders and spokesmen make it seem, and those same leaders look more impressive in their home territory.

Almost everything the outside world thinks is wrong with China is indeed a genuine problem. Perhaps not the most extreme allegations, of large-scale forced organ-harvesting and similar barbarities. But brutal extremes of wealth and poverty? Arbitrary and prolonged detentions for those who rock the boat? Dangerous working conditions? Factories that take shortcuts on health and safety standards? Me-first materialism and an absence of ethics? I've met people affected by every problem on the list, and more.

But China's reality includes more than its defects. Most people are far better off than they were 20 years ago, and they are generally optimistic about what life will hold 20 years from now. This summer's Pew Global Attitudes Project finding that 86 percent of the Chinese public was satisfied with the country's overall direction—the highest of all the countries surveyed—was not some enforced or robotic consensus. It rings true with most of what I've seen in cities and across most of the country's provinces and autonomous regions, something I wouldn't have guessed from afar.

Americans are used to the idea that a country's problems don't tell its entire story. When I lived in Japan, I had to reassure fearful travelers to America that not every street corner had a daily drive-by shooting and not every passing stranger would beat them up out of bigotry. When foreigners travel or study in America, they usually put the problems in perspective and come to see the offsetting virtues and strengths. For all the differences between modern China and America, most outsiders go through a similar process here: they see that China is a country with huge problems but also one with great strengths and openness.

It's authoritarian, sure—and you put yourself at great risk if you cross the government in the several areas it considers sacrosanct, from media control to "national security" in the broadest sense. (The closest I have come to trouble with the law was when I stopped to tie my shoe on Chang'an Boulevard, near Tiananmen Square in Beijing—and obliviously put my foot on what turned out to be a low pedestal around the main flagpole at Xinhua Gate, outside the headquarters of the country's ruling State Council. Three guards rushed at me and pushed me away to end this sacrilege.) But China is full of conflicting trends and impulses, every generalization about it is both true and false, and it is genuinely diverse in a way the Stalin-esque official line rarely conveys.

One other Olympics example: the opening ceremonies paid homage to China's harmonious embrace of its minority peoples with a giant national flag carried in by 56 children, each dressed in the native costume of one of China's recognized minority groups, including Tibetans, Mongolians, and Uighurs. Contrary to initial assurances from Chinese officials, it turned out that every one of the children was from the country's ethnic majority, Han Chinese. This was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reminiscent of Western practices of yesteryear, as when Al Jolson wore blackface or the Swedish actor Warner Oland was cast as Charlie Chan in 1930s films. And it was criticized by the Western sensibilities of today.

Another element of the mystery is the deftness gap. Inside the country, China's national leadership rarely seems as tin-eared as it is when dealing with the outside world. National-level democracy might come to China or it might not—ever. No one can be sure. But from the national level down to villages, where local officials are now elected, the government is by all reports becoming accountable in ways it wasn't before. As farmers have struggled financially, a long-standing agricultural tax has been removed. As migrant workers have become an exploited underclass in big cities, *hukou* (residence-permit) rules have been liberalized so that people can get medical care and send their children to school without having to return to their "official" residence back in the countryside. Whenever necessary, the government turns to repression, but that's usually not the first response.

The system prides itself on learning about problems as they arise and relieving social pressure before it erupts. In this regard it learned a lesson earlier this year, when its reaction to the first big natural disaster of 2008 turned into its own version of Hurricane Katrina. Unusual blizzards in central and southern China paralyzed roads and rail lines, and stranded millions of people traveling home for the Chinese New Year holidays; the central government seemed taken by surprise and was slow to respond. That didn't happen with the next disaster, three months later. When the Sichuan earthquake occurred, Premier Wen Jiabao was on an airplane to the stricken area the same afternoon.

Minor, provable lies—the sky is blue, no one wants to protest—inevitably build mistrust of larger claims that are closer to being true. And those are the claims the government most wants the world to listen to.

So I return to the puzzle: Why does a society that, like America, impresses most people who spend time here project such a poor image and scare people as much as it attracts them? Why do China's leaders, who survive partly by listening to their own people, develop such tin ears when dealing with the outside world? I don't pretend to have a solution. But here are some possible explanations, and some reasons why the situation matters to people other than the misunderstood Chinese.

There is no politer way to put the main problem than to call it "ignorance." Most Americans are parochial, but (surprise!) most Chinese and their leaders are more so. American politicians may not be good at understanding foreign sensitivities or phrasing their arguments in ways likely to be effective around the world, as foreigners have mentioned once or twice in recent years. But collectively they understand that America is part of an ongoing, centuries-long, worldwide experiment and discussion about political systems and human values, and that making their case well matters.

After the 9/11 attacks, America went through a round of "Why do they hate us?" inquiry. Whether or not that brought the United States closer to understanding its problems in parts of the Islamic world, it did represent a more serious effort to understand how the country was seen than anything I have heard of in China. When the Olympic torch relay this spring was plagued by boos and protests over Tibet in places ranging from France to the United States, the reaction at every level of the Chinese system seemed to be not just insult but genuine shock. Most Chinese people were familiar only with the idea that China has always been a generous elder brother to the (often ungrateful) Tibetans. By all evidence, no one in command anticipated or prepared for this ugly response. The same Pew survey that said most Chinese felt good about their country also found that they thought the rest of the world shared their view. That belief is touching, especially considering how much of China's history is marked by episodes of its feeling unloved and victimized. Unfortunately, it is also wrong. In many of the countries surveyed, China's popularity and reputation were low and falling. According to a report last year by Joshua Cooper Ramo of Kissinger Associates, most people in China considered their country very "trustworthy." Most people outside China thought the country was not trustworthy at all.

"The underlying problem is that very few people in China really understand how foreign opinion works, what the outside world reacts to and why," Sidney Rittenberg told me. Rittenberg is in a position to judge. He came to China with the U.S. Army in 1945 and spent 35 years here, including 16 in prison for suspected disloyalty to Chairman Mao. "Now very few people understand the importance of foreign opinion to China"—that is, the damage China does to itself by locking up those who apply for demonstration permits, or insisting on "jackal" talk.

During the Chinese Communist Party's rise to power and the civil war against Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists through the 1940s, the coterie around Mao knew how to spin the outside world, because they had to. One important goal was what Mao called "roping the whale": keeping the United States from intervening directly on Chiang's side. The future prime minister and foreign minister Zhou Enlai was especially skilled at handling foreigners. "He laid out battle plans and political strategies, in advance, with remarkable clarity," the muckraker Jack Anderson, who was a cub reporter in China, said of Zhou in his memoirs. "These truths made him so believable that a reporter would be inclined to accept his assurances, too, that the Chinese Communists weren't really Communists but just agrarian reformers."

Of course, most official voices of China now have the opposite effect. Their minor, provable lies—the sky is blue, no one wants to protest—inevitably build mistrust of larger claims that are closer to being true. And those are the claims the government most wants the world to listen to: that the country is moving forward and is less repressive and more open than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GALLERY IT'S MUTUAL *by Laurie Rosenwald*

official actions and explanations (or lack of them) make China seem. Many Chinese who have seen the world are very canny about it, and have just the skills government spokesmen lack—for instance, understanding the root of foreign concerns and addressing them not with special pleading ("This is China ...") but on their own terms. Worldly Chinese demonstrate this every day in the businesses, universities, and nongovernmental organizations where they generally work. But the closer Chinese officials are to centers of political power, the less they know what they don't know about the world.

Even as the top leadership tries to expand its international exposure and experience, much of the country's daily reality is determined by mayors and governors and police. "It's like the local sheriff in the old days in South Carolina," said Sidney Rittenberg, who grew up there. "He'd say, 'They can talk and talk in Washington, but I'm the law down here.'" Thus one hypothesis for the embarrassment of the "authorized" protest sites during the Olympics: Hu Jintao's vice president and heir apparent, Xi Jinping, was officially in charge of all preparations for the Games; hobnobbing with the IOC, he would see the payoff to China of allowing some people to protest. But the applications went to the local police, who had no interest in letting troublemakers congregate. A similar mix-up may well have led to the embarrassment over whether to open the Internet during the Olympics, and could also explain many of the other fumbles that get so much more attention than the news the government wants to give.

The Communist Party schools that train the country's leadership are constantly expanding their curricula to meet the needs of the times; but for advancement in party ranks what matters is loyalty, predictability, and party-line conformity. The United States saw just how well a similar approach paid off in worldwide respect and effectiveness when it staffed its Embassy in Baghdad's Green Zone mainly with people who followed the party line in Washington.

The damage China does to itself by its clumsy public presentation is obvious—though apparently not yet obvious enough to its leadership. For outsiders, the central problem is that a country that will inevitably have increasing and perhaps dominant influence on the world still has surprisingly little idea of how the world sees it. That, in turn, raises the possibility of blunders and unnecessary showdowns, and in general the predicament of a new world power stomping around, Gargantua-like, making onlookers tremble. The world has known this predicament before. It is what the previously established powers have feared about America, starting a hundred years ago and with periodic recurrences since then, most recently starting in March of 2003. Maybe that puts America in a good position to help China take this next step. ■

James Fallows is an Atlantic *national correspondent; his blog is at jamesfallows.theatlantic.com.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MICHELLE RHEE CHARGED IN *as chancellor of the Washington, D.C., public schools wielding BlackBerrys and data—and a giant axe. She has made a city with possibly the country's worst public schools ground zero for education reform, and attracted a cadre of young zealots some critics call "Rhee-bots." Now the changes that she insists schoolchildren need are colliding head-on with the political wants of adults.*

PROFILE

THE LIGHTNING ROD

By Clay Risen

MICHELLE RHEE IS ALWAYS on message and always on call. If she's not speaking, she's thumbing away on her BlackBerry, or working a cell phone, or flipping open a laptop. When I met with her recently, she sat at her desk clasping a BlackBerry and a cell phone in her right hand; in front of her was a sleek Sony Vaio laptop, which she monitored incessantly during our conversation, while off to her right was yet another computer, a desktop PC. Apparently there is a second BlackBerry somewhere. And it's not for show. "Every e-mail a parent sends me, I answer," she said, a boast that even her critics grudgingly concede.

BlackBerry-wielding type-A personalities out to shake up the system are a common sight in Washington. Until recently, their habitat consisted almost exclusively of the halls of Congress and the K Street corridor—the think tanks, lobby shops, and congressional staffs most of us talk about when we talk about the capital. Rarely would you find them in the "other" Washington, the one most Americans would prefer to forget: the perennially dysfunctional city of 580,000 people, many of them poor and black; the city of the Marion Barry machine, of sky-high murder rates and voter disenfranchisement and the 1968 King riots. And, of course, the city of abysmal schools.

But thanks to Rhee and her boss, the young and charismatic Mayor Adrian Fenty, the city government is awash with the sort of überprofessionals once found exclusively in congressional committee rooms and white-shoe law firms. Fenty is a big part of the rush. Like a number of young mayors—Newark's Cory Booker and, until he moved to the governor's office, Baltimore's Martin O'Malley—Fenty is a data-focused decision maker, less interested in politics as usual than a politics of results. Soon after taking office, in January of last year, Fenty focused his energy on wresting control of the city schools from the all-powerful school board, as New York's Michael Bloomberg did in 2002, a move that has gained the interest of many fellow mayors around the country. By last July, the city council had approved the mayor's appointment of Rhee as Washington's first schools chancellor.

Since her arrival, in the summer of 2007, Rhee, just 38 years old, has become the most controversial figure in American public education and the standard-bearer for a new type

MORE ONLINE

For an interview with Michelle Rhee about teaching and the D.C. school system, visit www.theatlantic.com/rhee.

THEATLANTIC.COM

DAVID DEAL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of schools leader nationwide. She and her cohort often seek to bypass the traditional forces of education schools and unions, instead embracing nontraditional reform mechanisms like charter schools, vouchers, and the No Child Left Behind Act. "They tend to be younger, and many didn't come through the traditional route," says Margaret Sullivan, a former education analyst at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. And that often means going head-to-head with the people who did.

Rhee, responsible not to a school board but only to the mayor, went on a spree almost as soon as she arrived. She gained the right to fire central-office employees and then axed 98 of them. She canned 24 principals, 22 assistant principals, and, at the beginning of this summer, 250 teachers and 500 teaching aides. She announced plans to close 23 underused schools and set about restructuring 26 other schools (together, about a third of the system). And she began negotiating a radical performance-based compensation contract with the teachers union that could revolutionize the way teachers get paid.

Her quick action has brought Rhee laudatory profiles everywhere from *Newsweek* to the *Memphis Commercial-Appeal*, and appearances on *Charlie Rose* and at Allen & Company's annual Sun Valley conference. Washington is now ground zero for education reformers. "People are coming from across the country to work for her," says Andrew Rotherham, the co-director of Education Sector, a Washington think tank. "It's the thing to do." Rhee had Stanford and Harvard business-school students on her intern staff this summer, and she has received blank checks from reform-minded philanthropists at the Gates and Broad foundations to fund experimental programs. Businesses have flooded her with offers to help—providing supplies, mentoring, or just giving cash.

Rhee went on a spree almost as soon as she arrived, firing 98 administrators, 24 principals, 22 assistant principals, and, this summer, 750 teachers and aides.

But a lot of people who live in long-neglected neighborhoods are nervous—particularly those who see her as the vanguard of a gentrified, post-black Washington. In this city, everything revolves around race, class, and neighborhoods, and it makes no small difference that Rhee is an upper-middle-class Korean American from suburban Ohio, overseeing a system that is more than 80 percent black and overwhelmingly poor. "One of the things I see Rhee's reform going hand in hand with," says Lee Glazer, a D.C. Public Schools mother and co-founder of Save Our Schools, an activist group that has opposed Rhee, "is a much larger gentrification plan that's been at work in the city for many years"—an understandable fear, given the rising cost of living in Washington and the condo developments pushing into formerly depressed parts of town. "It's hard to tell if they just don't know what the hell they're doing or they're evilly brilliant." Community pressure has, in turn, translated into political pressure from the city council, which is searching for ways to rein in the very chancellor it just empowered.

Washington, in other words, is a battlefield and national testing ground where upstart young reformers are pitted against an establishment unwilling to give ground to what it sees as reckless social experiments. "Anything that happens in D.C. tends to matter beyond D.C., because the school system is held up as an example for education," says Kevin Carey, the research and policy manager at Education Sector. In the past, the city's failure was taken as proof that urban public education wasn't working. Rhee's goal is to make Washington a showcase proving that view wrong. If she succeeds, she could have a stunning impact on American public education.

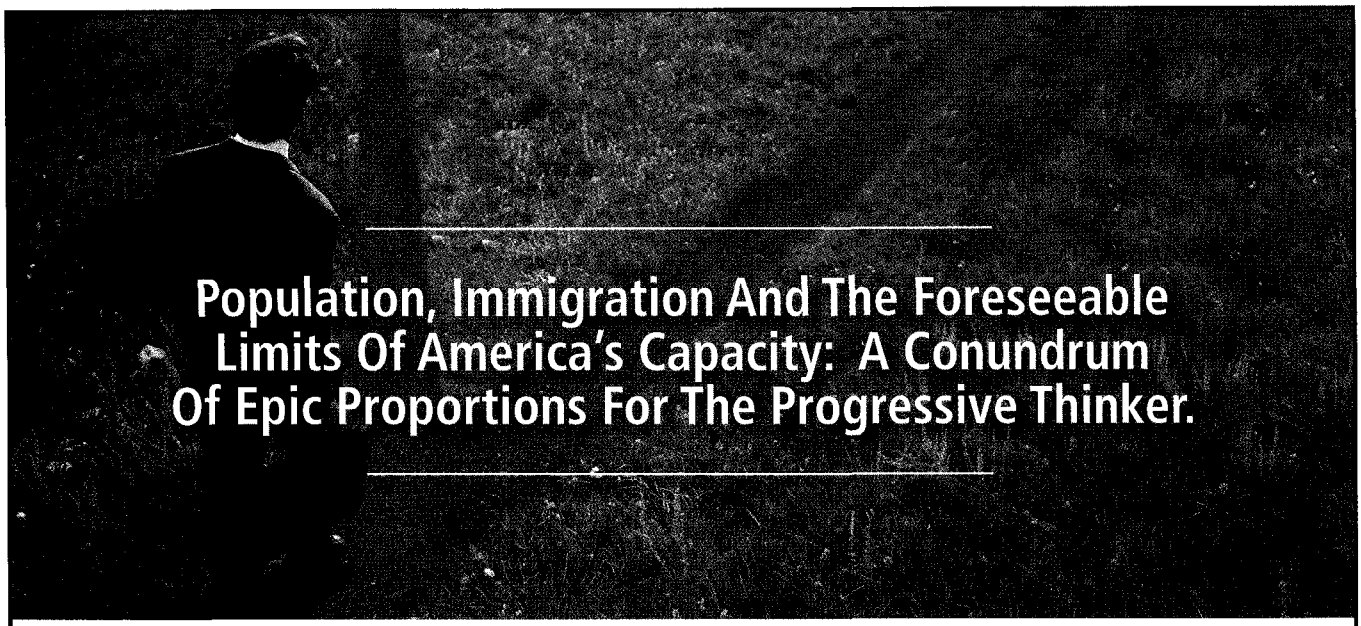
For decades, an establishment of Democratic politicians backed by union leaders has ruled the Washington public schools, which by almost any measure—test scores, attendance, safety—are among the worst in the country. All sides—unions, reformers, parents, and politicians—agree that substantial change is needed. What they can't agree on is the how. Reformers call for closing failing schools, deciding salaries on merit, and giving parents the choice of where students go to school.

Community activists may applaud these changes in the abstract, but they criticize the means, viewing reform plans as having been concocted by think tanks and nonprofits to be tested on disenfranchised poor minorities (they offer no dramatic proposals of their own). They fear that closing and consolidating schools will create administrative and security nightmares, as students from rival neighborhoods are thrust together. They worry that the new chancellor is cutting vital staff. "People are concerned, morale is low," says Candi Peterson, a board member of the Washington Teachers' Union, which engaged in a protracted struggle with Rhee over the new contract. But mostly, Rhee's opponents are coalescing around the charge that her reforms have run roughshod over the community—that she is less a chancellor than a dictator.

The problems Rhee faced when she arrived went beyond the classroom. Washington's $1 billion schools budget gave the system the third-highest per-pupil spending in the country, but much of the money fed a bureaucratic monstrosity that relied on disorganized paper files, kept paying ex-employees while missing paychecks to current teachers, let new textbooks and equipment languish in warehouses, and lacked even a firm enrollment count. "I'm not against reform," Peterson says. "I know we need reform."

Only 43 percent of students entering the ninth grade in a D.C. public school graduate within five years, and only 9 percent get a college degree within five years of leaving high school. In 2007, Washington ranked last among 11 urban school systems in math and second-to-last in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Not surprisingly, the system has hemorrhaged students: the current estimate of the student body, 46,000, is less than half what the 1960 total was. Many of those losses have come since

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Population, Immigration And The Foreseeable Limits Of America's Capacity: A Conundrum Of Epic Proportions For The Progressive Thinker.

As America's population races from the current 300 million to a projected 400 million in the next 30 years*, progressive thinkers are confronted with a debate among themselves – and others – as to our nation's capacity to absorb domestic population growth and growth due almost entirely to immigration. What price will we pay in terms of the environment? What will be the impact on resources from water to energy? What additional challenges will be created by this growth? What is our responsibility to future generations?

The Dots That Nobody Really Wants To Connect

People of virtually all major political persuasions agree that America has problems—huge problems. Air quality in many regions is a threat to health. Water is compromised and becoming scarce. Traffic in a number of metropolitan areas has arrived at a point that makes it unfixable. Infrastructure is a disaster waiting to happen. Who can argue with those observations? The disagreement arises when anyone makes the point that all of these problems are caused by a large and fast-growing population. The more people there are, the more challenging the problems become. These problems are acute with our population at the current level of 300 million. What happens at 400 million? Or 600 million?

The Misconception Of Inevitability

One prevailing thought for those willing to connect the dots is that meteoric population growth is inevitable. The pyramid is being built and there is nothing we can do about it. Population growth is destined to be exponential. But the reality is that Americans are having fewer children. The other reality is that 82%** of America's future population growth will be driven by immigration and births to immigrants. While immigration at some level will surely continue, there is a case to be made for taking another look at the numbers in order to maintain some order and common sense in the growth of our population.

At Some Point, We May Have To Make A Choice

We want it all. We want a clean environment, adequate natural resources, good housing, plenty of food, first-rate healthcare and so on. We also feel a need to welcome the world to our front door, or in millions of cases, our back door. But America is rapidly approaching the point of no return. Either we opt for preserving the quality of life that has attracted so many millions in the past by limiting some in the future. Or we continue to accept millions, knowing that our children and grandchildren will continue to pay a huge price.

Nobody wants to close the doors. Nobody wants to totally abandon our heritage of immigration and rich tapestry it has woven. But with more sensible numbers we could actually restore it. More and more progressive thinkers are saying it is time to connect the dots. To think about the future. To solve the conundrum that is placing so many like-minded thinkers in conflict.

America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning

300 million people today, 400 million in just 30 years. Think about it.

American Immigration Control Foundation	Californians for Population Stabilization	Federation for American Immigration Reform	NumbersUSA	Social Contract Press
www.aicfoundation.com	**www.capsweb.org**	**www.fairus.org**	**www.numbersusa.org**	**www.thesocialcontract.com**

*Based on U.S. Census Bureau projections, 2008
**Pew Hispanic Center

Paid for by America's Leadership Team for Long Range Population-Immigration-Resource Planning

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rhee in her office, and in her element

Congress, which has oversight of the school system, approved charter schools for the District in the late 1990s.

Things weren't always so bad. Up to the mid-1960s, Washington had some of the country's best black public schools, including Dunbar High School, which produced Senator Edward Brooke, the civil-rights lawyer Charles Hamilton Houston, and D.C. Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton. The schools were a magnet for middle-class black families who wanted a quality education but were largely shut out of white-majority schools, either by law or by residential segregation. By 1960, Washington was a center of black intellectual and cultural life. "People talk about Harlem, but in terms of a professional class and intelligentsia, Washington was on par," says NPR's Juan Williams, who covered education for *The Washington Post* in the 1970s.

Like many urban districts, Washington thrived because it could rely on a class of educators—in this case, African Americans—who were mostly kept out of other professions. But as barriers eroded in the 1950s and 1960s, experienced black teachers began leaving for better opportunities. At the same time, rising crime and the calamitous 1968 riots reversed the flow of black middle-class families, particularly after the 1968 Fair Housing Act encouraged them to decamp to the suburbs. Combined with the white flight that had by the late 1960s largely run its course, black flight left behind a core of socially isolated, desperately poor families, who suffered as the crime and joblessness rates climbed steeply through the 1970s.

Black flight also left behind a power vacuum, which was eagerly filled by a new generation of activists fronted by the civil-rights leader Marion Barry. Though he later became the butt of late-night-TV jokes, Barry is a political genius, and in the early 1970s he was one of the first in his generation to see the school system's political potential. Until Congress granted the city limited home rule in 1973, the D.C. school board was the only elected body in Washington, and thus one of the only paths of political ascent for the city's black leaders. In 1971, Barry won a landslide election for a seat on the board; he was so popular that his fellow members immediately made him president, a position he held until moving to the city council in 1974 and to the mayor's office four years later.

Barry quickly grasped that the school system could do more than just facilitate his own rise. With its thousands of well-paying jobs, it was an ideal way to rebuild the black middle class—and, not incidentally, it was a limitless source of patronage. Barry's climb coincided with that of William Simons, the fiery head of the Washington Teachers' Union. Simons was a sort of black equivalent to Albert Shanker, then the voluble head of New York's United Federation of Teachers, and he led his union in two lengthy, debilitating strikes during the 1970s. Through it all, Barry played the go-between, working the city and Congress around to Simons's position. A new political base was emerging, populated by teachers and led by Barry. "It's no longer about educating the best and brightest of black Washington but about establishing the schools as a place where blacks can get better jobs, higher salaries, and more benefits," Williams told me.

A generation later, the result was a system that was overstaffed, inefficient, and resistant to change, even as it got worse at its primary role of educating students. Into this mess stepped Adrian Fenty and Michelle Rhee.

Rhee's L-shaped desk sits just inside the door of a large, noisy room on the top floor of the D.C. Public Schools headquarters, a few blocks north of the Capitol. Three of her close aides have desks nearby, and a TV tuned to CNN blares from the opposite wall. The door is open, and people

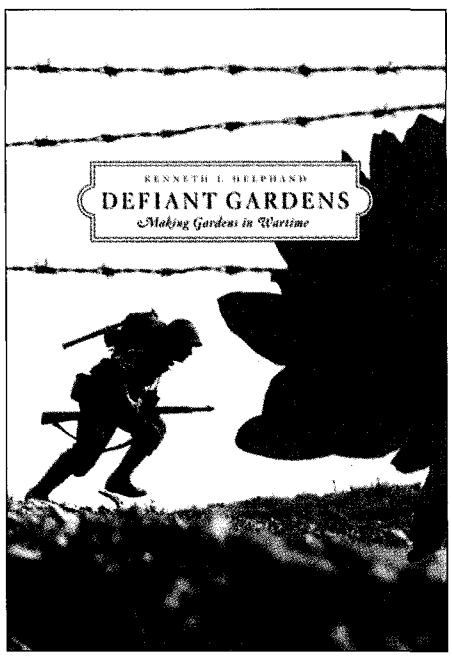
DAVID DEAL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Sometimes a book appears that makes it possible to see the world in a new way...

. . . and Kenneth Helphand's *Defiant Gardens* is one of those."

— *Rebecca Solnit*



"The photographs, drawings, and archival material [Helphand] has collected tell an astonishing story."

— *Wall Street Journal*

"A stunning look at heroic efforts to create beauty, order, and even life-sustaining food in the midst of war."

— *Chicago Tribune*

"A thought-provoking analysis of why people build and work in gardens during times of conflict."

— *Washington Post*

"Anyone doubting the therapeutic power of nature need only read Kenneth Helphand's new book."

— *Audubon Magazine*

TRINITY UNIVERSITY PRESS

available at bookstores and online retailiers
www.trinity.edu/tupress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passing by poke their heads in to say hi. Only a change in carpet color, from mottled gray in the hall to off-pink, signals an executive presence. Rhee doesn't stand on ceremony, and she doesn't expect her guests to, either. During our interview, I sat on a chair crammed between her desk and the door.

Rhee is an obsessive worker, the type normally found in consulting firms and medical schools, up at 6 a.m. and often awake until after midnight. She rarely works from notes, and usually shows up at meetings without handlers, speaking with the rapid cadence of a high-school debater and peppering her sentences with words like *crappy* and *awesome*. And she does not suffer fools, gladly or otherwise. When I asked her how she would characterize her ideal relationship with parents, she replied, "That's a great question. So often reporters ask me stupid questions. I had one interview yesterday, and I was like, 'Okay, you are not smart.'"

On paper and in public, Rhee comes across as passionate and talented, armed with a casual, biting wit. Those qualities win her praise in newspaper profiles and applause at Sun Valley conferences. But as you get to know her, people say, it's easy to wonder whether there's anything besides the image. "There doesn't seem to be any difference between her on- and off-camera personas," says Kevin Carey, of Education Sector. I've heard some of Rhee's supporters call her and her staff "Rhee-volutionaries." Her opponents call them "Rhee-bots."

There *is* more to Rhee than that. She is intensely committed to her two daughters, something even her occasional adversaries in the community will readily point out. "She's a great mother," says Cherita Whiting, chair of the city's Ward 4 Education Council. Rhee's way of speaking with kids was frequently trotted out in my conversations as an example of her people skills: "She's very personable," says Claire Taylor, co-chair of a local PTA. "Whether you're a kindergartner or a student in a high school, she gets down to your level." (No one mentioned her ability to relate to adults, except in strictly business situations.)

Rhee is very close to her parents, both of them Korean immigrants—her father is a retired doctor and her mother owned a clothing store. They sent their daughter to a posh private school in Toledo, and also to spend a year living with relatives in Seoul. She excelled academically and majored in government at Cornell. Teaching was not in the picture. But during her senior year, she saw a show on PBS touting Teach for America, a then-new program that placed recent college graduates in low-income, low-performing schools. She applied and was accepted. The decision changed her life. She met Kevin Huffman, a fellow idealist and Ohio native, at a TFA summer training session in 1994, and they were married in 1996 (they are now separated).

After three years of teaching second and third grade in Baltimore, Rhee left to pursue a master's at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government with plans to return to education, though she didn't know where or how. She had made enough of an impression on Teach for America that its founder and president, Wendy Kopp, called her in the spring of 1997, just before graduation, to see if she would return to the fold. Kopp wanted her to quarterback the launch of a spin-off, the New Teacher Project, which would contract with school districts to find and train people looking to jump from their old jobs—scientists, journalists, lawyers—into education. "We brought her on to develop our business plan and get the project off the ground," Kopp told me over coffee at a downtown Starbucks, "but it soon became very clear that she could run the whole thing."

It's no surprise that Kopp likes Rhee. The two are almost identical in their zeal and relentless message delivery. They are both obsessive e-mailers. I got the feeling that they spend long hours prepping for every possible question. Not all reformers are so singularly focused—Andrew Rotherham's Education Sector blog often veers into discussions of fishing—but the movement is such that it attracts people who will build their lives around their jobs, and whose assessment of other people begins and ends with their work ethic. It's something they don't apologize for: personal sacrifice is necessary to any revolution. *Relentless pursuit* is a catchphrase at Teach for America, and the people who use it mean it. When people say that Rhee, Kopp, and others eat, breathe, and sleep education reform, the only doubt is whether they actually sleep.

Rhee's drive paid off. At its 10-year mark, the New Teacher Project had recruited some 28,000 new teachers, the bulk of them mid-career entrants, in more than 200 school districts, including in New York City and Washington. Today, the program operates in 25 U.S. cities, contributing in some up to 30 percent of all teachers hired annually. "She took something that could have operated at a lower level and turned it into something with real impact," Kopp told me.

She did all this long-distance: the New Teacher Project is headquartered in New York, but soon after its founding, Rhee moved back to Toledo (with Huffman, by then a lawyer) to be near her parents; later she followed them to Denver, where they moved after retirement. All the while she was

---

MY CAREER IN RADIO

I'm a radio man for thirty-some years
In St. Paul, an old variety show
Like those I used to hear, my dears,
When I was a child long ago.
To critics, my show is peppered
With little bits of Bob & Ray,
Jack Benny, and Jean Shepherd,
But those critics are dying (Hooray!)
And to twenty-year-olds who were born
Too late to hear the great Fred Allen
I am the master of the form,
Sailing the airwaves like Magellan.
If a thief escapes and is not hung
He may be honored by the young.

—Garrison Keillor

Garrison Keillor's new collection, Sonnets, 1983–2008, *was just published by Common Good Books.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flying weekly to New York or the project's client districts around the country. Somewhere in there she found time to give birth to two daughters.

Rhee might have maintained her marathon commutes indefinitely if it hadn't been for a commitment Adrian Fenty made in the spring of last year. Rhee had already been approached about the chancellor job by several people in his administration, and she had demurred each time, citing family commitments. But Fenty kept pushing, and eventually she laid out her real concern: she saw herself as a "change agent," and Washington as a graveyard for careers like hers. The school board was too powerful and too dominated by unions and special interests to give much of a chance to someone intent on closing schools and renegotiating contracts. Then Fenty laid out his vision: he would take control of the schools, and provide whatever political cover Rhee needed to completely overhaul them. The chancellor and the mayor would make the important decisions. The District's Office of the State Superintendent of Education would continue to manage the kinds of state-federal transactions handled by other state education departments, and would be headed by someone Fenty had already appointed. A few weeks after their meeting, she was scouting houses in Washington.

Now, Rhee is in a position to provide Fenty with political cover in return. She has become the focus of opponents' anger, while Fenty has reaped the political goodwill generated by the first signs of improvement in the schools, and by the relief that at last someone is doing *something*. Her charge-ahead manner may be essential to getting reform done. "The reality is, if you want to make changes, it's very hard to do that by committee," says Kristin Ehrgood, a board member of D.C. School Reform Now, a group that has been generally supportive of Rhee's efforts. "While we certainly need every voice heard, it doesn't mean everyone is right." But, though Rhee can turn on the charm when she needs to, she has at times seemed reckless in provoking teachers and even parents.

A case in point is her own children's school. Last fall, Rhee and Huffman enrolled their two daughters, now 6 and 9, at Oyster-Adams, a bilingual public school. By all accounts, she kept a low profile, dropping off her kids three days a week (Rhee shares custody with Huffman, who has also relocated to Washington) and staying away from school politics.

She was, however, paying close attention to what she was hearing from other parents about the school's principal, Marta Guzman. Guzman was popular with many Hispanic parents, who saw her as a role model for minority success, and she had met most academic benchmarks. But she had also reportedly been unresponsive to various faculty and parent concerns, some of which Rhee heard at a November 2007 dinner with several parents. "There were some people who said this woman was the best thing since sliced bread, and others who said she was the worst thing that ever happened to the school, and lots in between," Rhee told me.

If Rhee can make Washington's schools a showcase for merit pay and other reforms, she could have a stunning impact on American public education.

The following May, Guzman was among the 24 principals to receive nonrenewal notices from Rhee. "There was no reason given in the letter," Guzman told me. "It simply stated that the chancellor had decided not to renew my contract." Guzman accepted her termination, but dozens of parents didn't. The story exploded, with accusations of racism and classism popping up in e-mails, listservs, and the pages of *The Washington Post*. Mostly, though, parents complained about the lack of information coming from the chancellor's office. Oyster-Adams was, after all, *their* school, and they felt they should have a say in its direction. "People were upset with the way it was handled," said one pro-Rhee parent who asked to remain anonymous.

Rhee met with parents a couple of weeks later, and the controversy eventually died down (it helped that the teachers released a statement supporting her decision). "It's hard to convey how charismatic she is," Claire Taylor, the PTA leader, whose child attends Oyster-Adams, told me. "Her office will announce something to be done, like close a school. Everybody hates that. But when she goes and talks to the parents, many of them do a 180."

Rhee probably made the right decision, and she carried it out efficiently. But at least at first, she paid too little attention to anticipating the inevitable worries of parents, and did unnecessary damage to her own image. Whether she recognizes it or not, her task is political as well as educational.

The reform camp, of which Rhee is the new hero, is shot through with divisions. But its members share a few common characteristics, and perhaps the most important is a belief in the primacy of teachers. This sounds banal, but it's actually quite controversial. Many people believe that teachers and the classroom are only one part of a vast web of relationships and environments that determine educational success. A high-profile proposal issued in June by the Economic Policy Institute and signed by a long list of boldfaced names recommended a laundry list of extracurricular efforts to boost student achievement.

Rhee's name doesn't appear among the signatures. In her opinion, external factors simply underline the need for better educators. And while she pays lip service to the realities of urban poverty outside school walls, she dismisses the impact that poverty and violence might have on achievement. "As a teacher in this system, you have to be willing to take personal responsibility for ensuring your children are successful despite obstacles," she told me. "You can't say, 'My students didn't get any breakfast today,' or 'No one put them to bed last night,' or 'Their electricity got cut off in the house, so they couldn't do their homework.'" This sort of moral certitude is exactly what turns off many veteran teachers in Washington. Even if Rhee is right, she seems to be asking for superhuman efforts, consistently, for decades to come. Making missionary zeal a job requirement is a tough way to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

build morale, not to mention support, among the teachers who have to confront the D.C. ghetto every day.

Rhee and her reform allies' response is to call for better teachers, and they want to work through Teach for America and other alternative programs to find them. This is another sticking point. Traditionally, a good teacher was considered to be someone who had trained in education schools, been certified by state boards, enlisted in unions, and committed to a lifetime career—elements tightly interwoven with any district's political structure. Reformers criticize all those elements. One of Rhee's favorite anecdotes, which she has recounted in practically every speech I've seen her give, contrasts the hard work, creativity, and popularity of a newbie teacher named "Mr. Wallace"—who just happens to be part of Teach for America—with a hardened older teacher across the hall, who stands at the door flicking the light switch and saying "I'm waiting, I'm waiting" to get her students' attention. "Well, they're waiting too," Rhee invariably says. "They're waiting for her to teach them something." In Rhee's world, the educational system divides between the Mr. Wallaces and everyone else, and it's no coincidence that Mr. Wallace sounds an awful lot like Rhee herself.

Making missionary zeal a job requirement is a tough way to build morale, not to mention support, among the teachers who have to confront the D.C. ghetto every day.

Rhee advocates another controversial plank in the reformist agenda: merit pay. Vociferously opposed by the teachers unions—a National Education Association convention audience booed Barack Obama when he told them he supported it—merit pay scales a teacher's salary based on student achievement. Proponents say this is the only way to make teachers want to improve their performance. Opponents say it will torpedo already low morale and drive a wedge through faculty solidarity, and that basing merit pay on student performance leaves out all sorts of nonquantifiable aspects of learning. Rhee is willing to risk it. "We have heroic figures out in the school district, people who work unbelievable hours," she told me. "I want to not only recognize them but reward them. I want to pay them a lot more money"—more than $100,000, compared with the national average salary of $47,600. Rhee's proposed contract with the Washington Teachers' Union would allow current teachers to choose between tenure based on seniority combined with a lower salary and at-will employment combined with a higher, performance-based salary. The contract would place all new teachers in the latter category, and give all teachers a raise—but would effectively phase out tenure over time and make D.C. the first major school district to go to a completely merit-based pay structure. As this article went to press, negotiations were ongoing, but it was clear that Rhee faced an uphill battle. She had a backup in case the rank and file voted down the contract. During negotiations, additional plans were announced by the Office of the State Superintendent to tie teacher licensing to student achievement, sidestepping the union and effectively giving Rhee the power to fire underperforming teachers.

Behind the fighting lie basic questions: What makes a good teacher? And how do you recognize one? For Rhee and her fellow reformers, the answer is data. Lots of data. There may be many unquantifiables in teacher quality, but most of the traits that matter to reformers can be put into numbers. It's an attitude born of Rhee's experience in Teach for America, which regularly assesses its teachers' effectiveness against in-house and state achievement levels. "TFA is a machine," says Jennifer Kirmes, who taught for the program in Washington and now works in its Chicago office. "Everything is done with data and analysis. Everything you do reflects back on how your students are doing." Rhee fully supports the accountability that underlies No Child Left Behind. Every week, she and her top staff members hold a "School Stat" meeting where they pore over data on everything from student performance to facilities' work orders.

This year, Washington was one of the top choices for incoming TFA corps members, drawn largely by Rhee. As one D.C.-bound TFA teacher, Stephanie Neves, wrote on her blog, "We are here during some crazy times in DC. We are here for the revolution. DC '08!"

The problem is that those immediately affected by Rhee's reforms—teachers and parents—can be less enamored of her get-tough posture. Many felt particularly put out earlier this year when Rhee refused to release a draft of her 2008–2009 budget in advance of a community budget hearing and her submitting it to the mayor—a position several residents said violated city law, and they filed a lawsuit to fight it. (The Fenty administration claimed that its takeover of the schools obviated the law, but a judge required the administration to provide a draft copy of the budget to the plaintiffs. Another judge later ruled for the Fenty administration; the plaintiffs have appealed.) To be fair, Rhee did meet several times with parents and once with activists to discuss school closings, but "most of us felt it was mostly for show," Marc Borbely, who attended the activist meeting and later led the budget-lawsuit effort, told me. "The things we said were mostly disregarded. When it comes to real decision-making, her philosophy is, 'I'll get input, but there are no partners here.'"

Rhee sees herself not as a politician but as a technocrat; a decider, not a negotiator. "Does that mean every decision is going to be right? No," she said to me in a measured pace that sounded well-practiced. "Have I made some wrong decisions? Yeah. But the bottom line is, the reason I can sleep at night, really soundly every night, is because I know that even if I didn't make the right call, I made it because I believed at that moment that it was the best thing for kids."

Listening to Rhee, it's hard to disagree. But even if she speaks cavalierly about eschewing city politics, that doesn't make city politics go away. Complaints are bubbling up to the city council. In one particularly testy exchange at an all-day meeting in April, Marion Barry, now the representative for

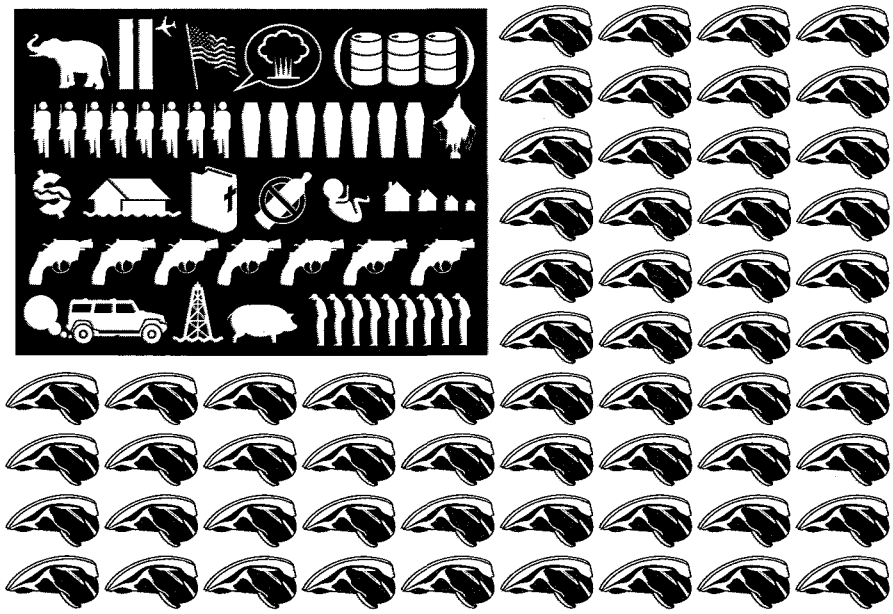
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the city's poorest ward, lectured Rhee on the political realities of her job. "Whether or not you and the mayor want to take it out of the political arena, you cannot, because education all over America has political implications," he told her. "Parents are also voters."

Rhee would have none of it. "I think part of the problem of how the district has been run in the past is that decisions have been made for political reasons, and based on what was going to placate and satisfy adults instead of what was in the best interests of children."

"Let me be succinct, because my time is running out," Barry retorted. "Talk to other people on this, because I think you're absolutely wrong ... I know you want to do it the right way, but I think that's causing us more problems than we need to have."

GALLERY RED-MEAT NATION *by Nigel Holmes*



The comment was a warning, but it was also a reflection of the very political nature of education in the American inner city, and particularly in Washington. In a city largely excluded from national politics, it makes sense that residents would feel particularly slighted by an outsider, installed without their input, who is happy to bypass the few forums left where poor and working-class parents can engage with the political system—the parent-teacher associations, the ward-level education committees, and other unofficial bodies that long wielded influence against the elected school board and suddenly find themselves powerless against a mayorally appointed chancellor. "I'm sympathetic with the need to act decisively and quickly, but at the same time, what does that do to one of our last democratic institutions?" asks Celia Oyler, a professor at Columbia University's Teachers College. To a reformer, that sounds like a classic plea for putting grown-ups' interests first.

Arguably, mayoral control has clarified political accountability, by making Fenty, rather than assorted school-board members and ancillary committees, ultimately responsible for fixing the schools. Mayoral control is now the source of Rhee's power—Fenty is overwhelmingly popular, in part thanks to Rhee's work—but it is also another potential weakness. "Fenty has a set term, and he's on board with her," Sara Mead, a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation, says. "The downside of having the mayor in charge is that you tie your fate to the mayor."

And cracks in that shield are already beginning to show. Though the city council gave Fenty control of the schools and later endorsed Rhee's job cuts, its members have been pushing bills to allow more council oversight of school operations and to reapportion power between Rhee and the state superintendent. Most recently, Barry and the council chair, Vincent Gray, delayed approval of millions of dollars in school-renovation funds. And it could get worse. "For legislators, when they see reform coming, there is a tendency to overregulate," says former city councilman Kevin Chavous. "It's a huge challenge. It has the potential to be lethal to all reform efforts."

Rhee is confronting the great divide over American public-education reform—not between left and right but between two philosophies about education. To Rhee and her fellow reformers, schools can, by themselves, produce successful students. To her opponents (and they include liberals and conservatives), schools are not enough, however "successful" their students. They are an important, but hardly the only, means with which children are inculcated with the skills and mores of their community.

The divide means that Rhee's challenge is not just to reform one of the worst school systems in the country and, in effect, prove whether or not inner-city schools can be revived at all. It is to answer a basic question about the nature of urban governance, a question about two visions of big-city management. In one, city politics is a vibrant, messy, democratic exercise, in which both the process and the results have value. In the other, city politics is only a prelude, the way to install a technocratic elite that can carry out reforms in relative isolation from the give-and-take of city life. Rhee's tenure will answer whether these two positions are mutually exclusive—and, if they are, whether public-school reform is even possible.

Clay Risen is the managing editor of Democracy: A Journal of Ideas *and the author of the forthcoming book* A Nation on Fire: America in the Wake of the King Assassination.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sea Change

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ARCTIC

By Scott Borgerson

Map by Bryan Christie

BEFORE OUR EYES, the Arctic is changing from an impenetrable wasteland into an oceanic crossroads. The polar ice cap has lost up to half its thickness near the North Pole in just the past six years and may have passed a tipping point; it is now shrinking at more than three times the rate predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change only four years ago. At the current pace, the Arctic may well be ice-free in summer by 2013.

The opening of a new waterway between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans is akin in historic significance to the opening of the Suez Canal, in 1869, or its Panamanian cousin, in 1914. With this sea change will come the rise and fall of international seaports, newfound access to nearly a quarter of the world's remaining undiscovered oil and gas reserves, and a recalibration of geostrategic power.

Scott Borgerson is the Visiting Fellow for Ocean Governance at the Council on Foreign Relations.

MORE ONLINE

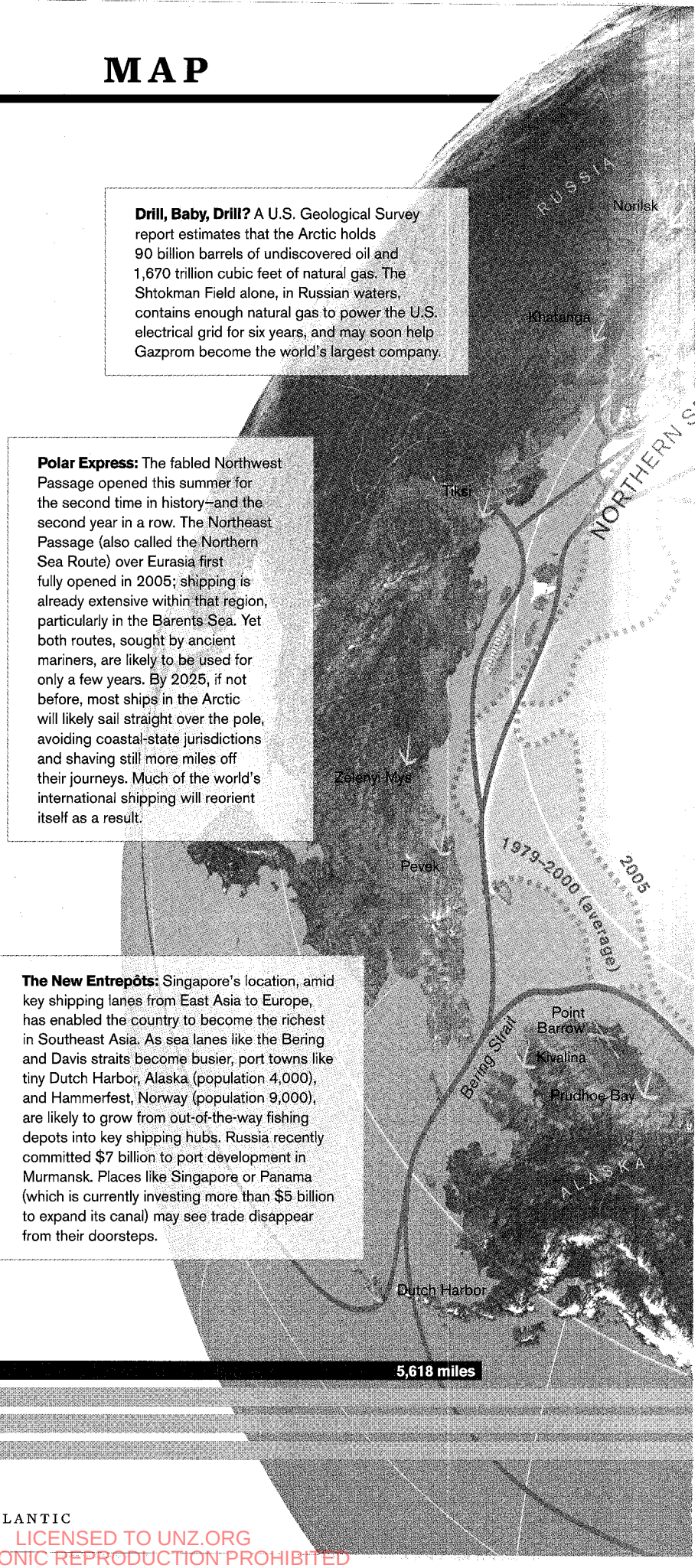
For an Arctic slideshow narrated by Scott Borgerson and his colleague Michael Levi, visit www.theatlantic.com/arctic.

THEATLANTIC.COM

Drill, Baby, Drill? A U.S. Geological Survey report estimates that the Arctic holds 90 billion barrels of undiscovered oil and 1,670 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The Shtokman Field alone, in Russian waters, contains enough natural gas to power the U.S. electrical grid for six years, and may soon help Gazprom become the world's largest company.

Polar Express: The fabled Northwest Passage opened this summer for the second time in history—and the second year in a row. The Northeast Passage (also called the Northern Sea Route) over Eurasia first fully opened in 2005; shipping is already extensive within that region, particularly in the Barents Sea. Yet both routes, sought by ancient mariners, are likely to be used for only a few years. By 2025, if not before, most ships in the Arctic will likely sail straight over the pole, avoiding coastal-state jurisdictions and shaving still more miles off their journeys. Much of the world's international shipping will reorient itself as a result.

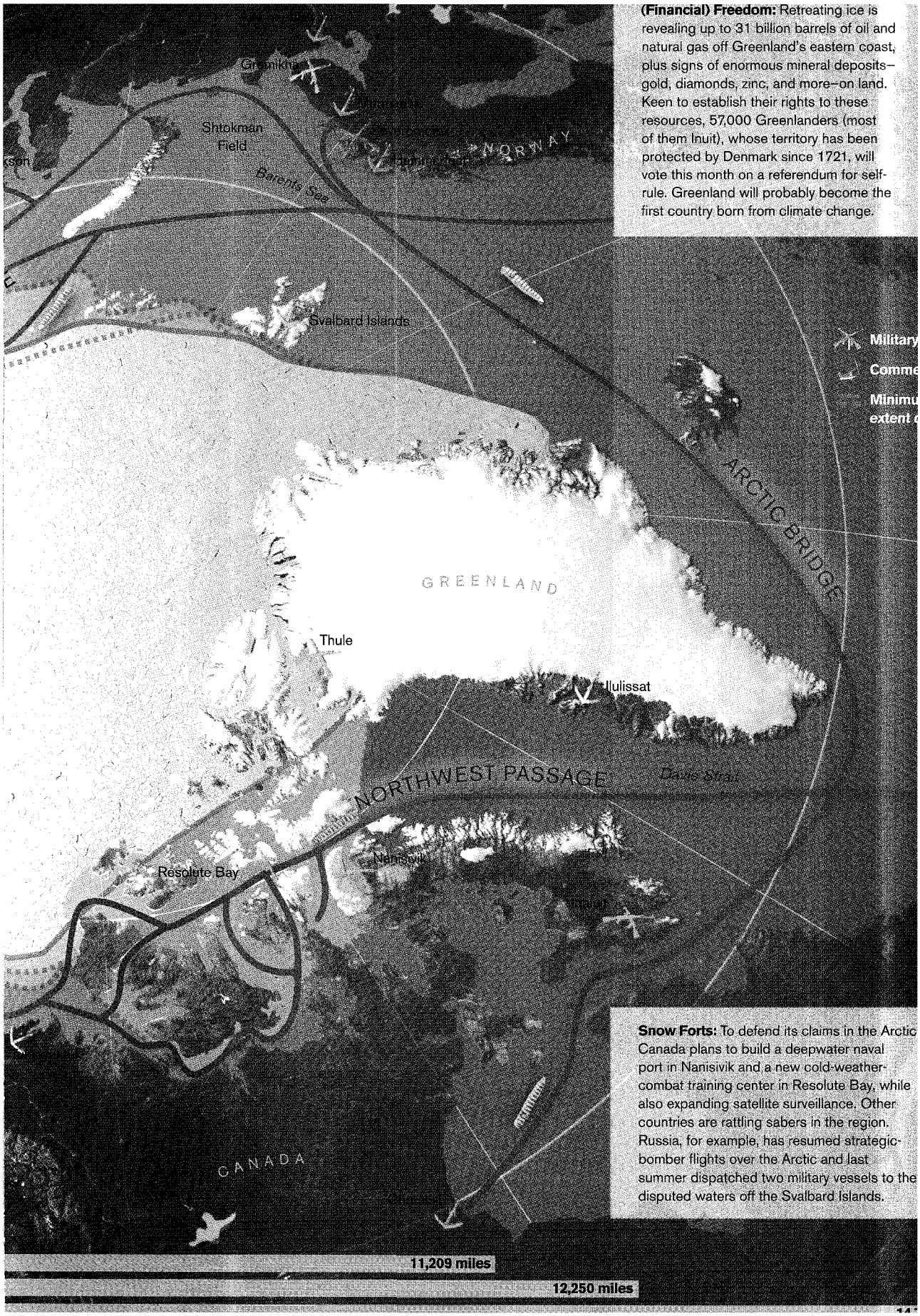
The New Entrepôts: Singapore's location, amid key shipping lanes from East Asia to Europe, has enabled the country to become the richest in Southeast Asia. As sea lanes like the Bering and Davis straits become busier, port towns like tiny Dutch Harbor, Alaska (population 4,000), and Hammerfest, Norway (population 9,000), are likely to grow from out-of-the-way fishing depots into key shipping hubs. Russia recently committed $7 billion to port development in Murmansk. Places like Singapore or Panama (which is currently investing more than $5 billion to expand its canal) may see trade disappear from their doorsteps.



Shipping distance from Yokohama, Japan, to Rotterdam, Netherlands (nautical miles)

Over the North Pole	5,618 miles
Through the Suez Canal	
Through the Panama Canal	
Around the Cape of Good Hope	

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



(Financial) Freedom: Retreating ice is revealing up to 31 billion barrels of oil and natural gas off Greenland's eastern coast, plus signs of enormous mineral deposits—gold, diamonds, zinc, and more—on land. Keen to establish their rights to these resources, 57,000 Greenlanders (most of them Inuit), whose territory has been protected by Denmark since 1721, will vote this month on a referendum for self-rule. Greenland will probably become the first country born from climate change.

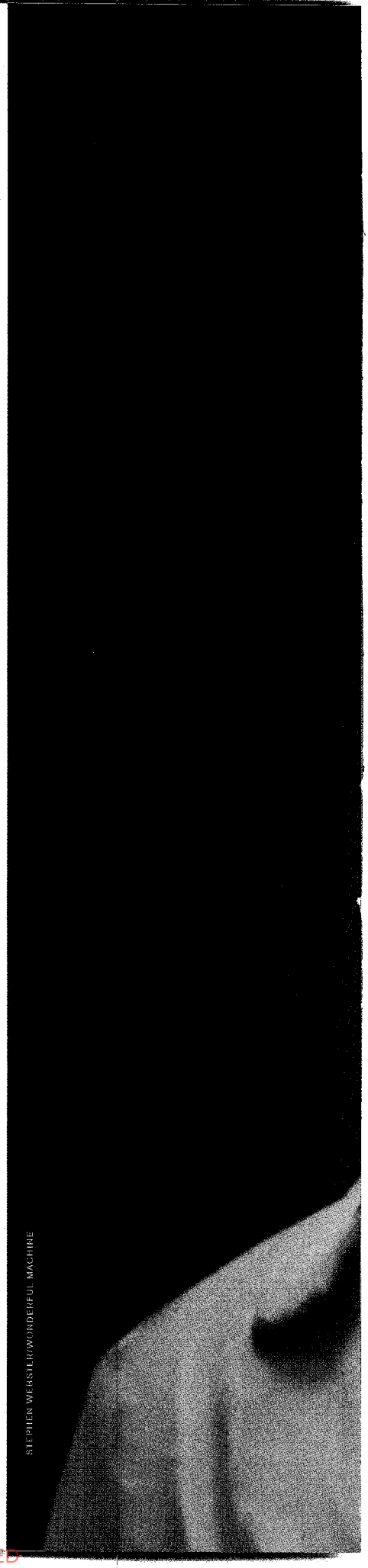
Snow Forts: To defend its claims in the Arctic Canada plans to build a deepwater naval port in Nanisivik and a new cold-weather-combat training center in Resolute Bay, while also expanding satellite surveillance. Other countries are rattling sabers in the region. Russia, for example, has resumed strategic-bomber flights over the Arctic and last summer dispatched two military vessels to the disputed waters off the Svalbard Islands.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AN EVOLVING APPROACH *to the science of pleasure suggests that each of us contains multiple selves—all with different desires, and all fighting for control. If this is right, the pursuit of happiness becomes even trickier. Can one self "bind" another self if the two want different things? Are you always better off when a Good Self wins? And should outsiders, such as employers and policy makers, get into the fray?*

FIRST PERSON PLURAL

By Paul Bloom



STEPHEN WEBSTER/WONDERFUL MACHINE

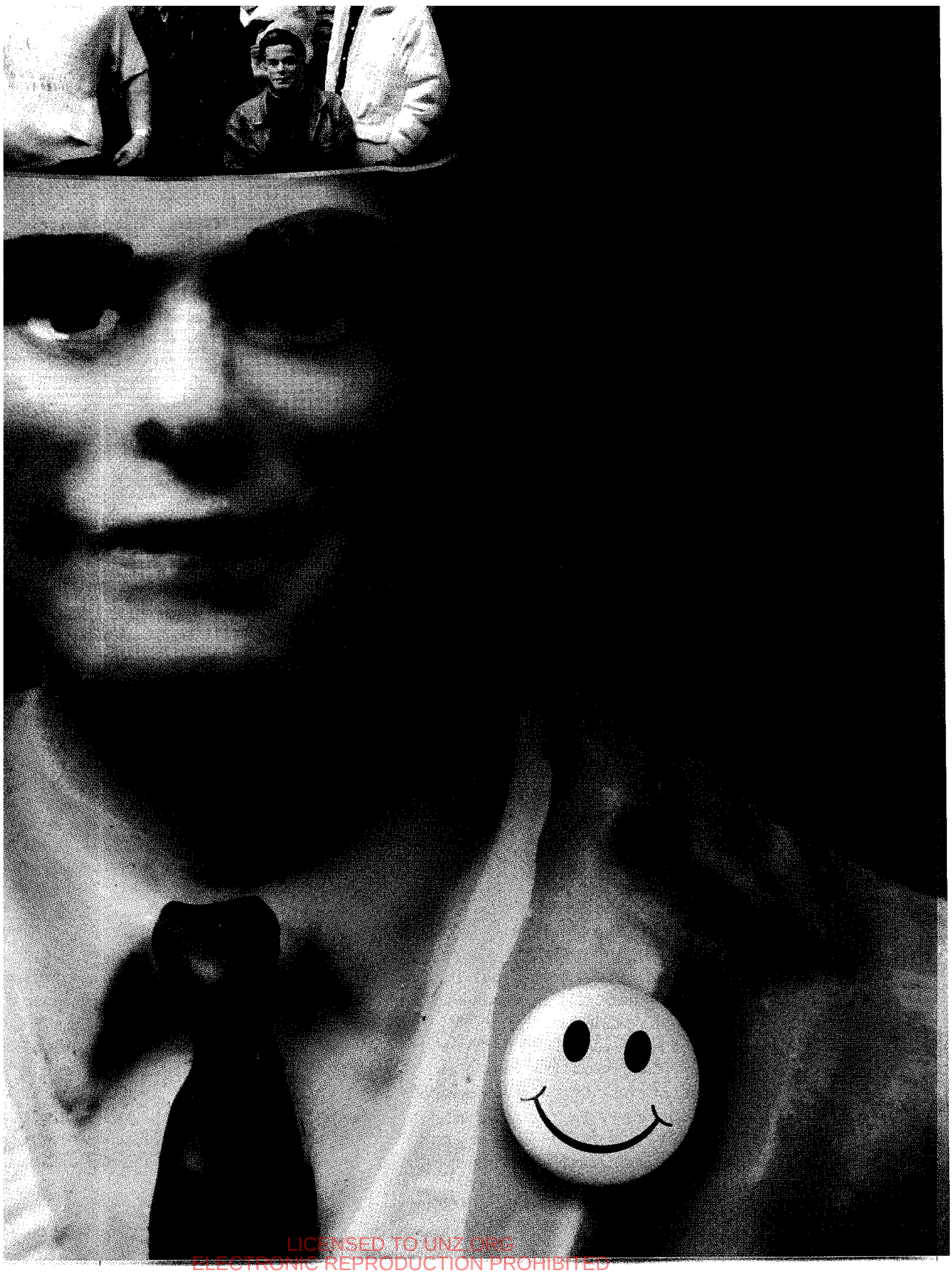
IMAGINE A LONG, terrible dental procedure. You are rigid in the chair, hands clenched, soaked with sweat—and then the dentist leans over and says, "We're done now. You can go home. But if you want, I'd be happy to top you off with a few minutes of mild pain."

There is a good argument for saying "Yes. Please do."

The psychologist and recent Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman conducted a series of studies on the memory of painful events, such as colonoscopies. He discovered that when we think back on these events, we are influenced by the intensity of the endings, and so we have a more positive memory of an experience that ends with mild pain than of one that ends with extreme pain, even if the mild pain is added to the same amount of extreme pain. At the moment the dentist makes his offer, you would, of course, want to say no—but later on, you would be better off if you had said yes, because your overall memory of the event wouldn't be as unpleasant.

Such contradictions arise all the time. If you ask people which makes them happier, work or vacation, they will remind you that they work for money and spend

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the money on vacations. But if you give them a beeper that goes off at random times, and ask them to record their activity and mood each time they hear a beep, you'll likely find that they are happier at work. Work is often engaging and social; vacations are often boring and stressful. Similarly, if you ask people about their greatest happiness in life, more than a third mention their children or grandchildren, but when they use a diary to record their happiness, it turns out that taking care of the kids is a downer—parenting ranks just a bit higher than housework, and falls below sex, socializing with friends, watching TV, praying, eating, and cooking.

The question "What makes people happy?" has been around forever, but there is a new approach to the science of pleasure, one that draws on recent work in psychology, philosophy, economics, neuroscience, and emerging fields such as neuroeconomics. This work has led to new ways—everything from beepers and diaries to brain scans—to explore the emotional value of different experiences, and has given us some surprising insights about the conditions that result in satisfaction.

But what's more exciting, I think, is the emergence of a different perspective on happiness itself. We used to think that the hard part of the question "How can I be happy?" had to do with nailing down the definition of *happy*. But it may have more to do with the definition of *I*. Many researchers now believe, to varying degrees, that each of us is a community of competing selves, with the happiness of one often causing the misery of another. This theory might explain certain puzzles of everyday life, such as why addictions and compulsions are so hard to shake off, and why we insist on spending so much of our lives in worlds—like TV shows and novels and virtual-reality experiences—that don't actually exist. And it provides a useful framework for thinking about the increasingly popular position that people would be better off if governments and businesses helped them inhibit certain gut feelings and emotional reactions.

Within each brain, different selves are continually popping in and out of existence—bargaining with, deceiving, and plotting against one another.

Like any organ, the brain consists of large parts (such as the hippocampus and the cortex) that are made up of small parts (such as "maps" in the visual cortex), which themselves are made up of smaller parts, until you get to neurons, billions of them, whose orchestrated firing is the stuff of thought. The neurons are made up of parts like axons and dendrites, which are made up of smaller parts like terminal buttons and receptor sites, which are made up of molecules, and so on.

This hierarchical structure makes possible the research programs of psychology and neuroscience. The idea is that interesting properties of the whole (intelligence, decision-making, emotions, moral sensibility) can be understood in terms of the interaction of components that themselves lack these properties. This is how computers work; there is every reason to believe that this is how we work, too.

But there is no consensus about the broader implications of this scientific approach. Some scholars argue that although the brain might contain neural subsystems, or modules, specialized for tasks like recognizing faces and understanding language, it also contains a part that constitutes a person, a self: the chief executive of all the subsystems. As the philosopher Jerry Fodor once put it, "If, in short, there is a community of computers living in my head, there had also better be somebody who is in charge; and, by God, it had better be me."

More-radical scholars insist that an inherent clash exists between science and our long-held conceptions about consciousness and moral agency: if you accept that our brains are a myriad of smaller components, you must reject such notions as character, praise, blame, and free will. Perhaps the very notion that there are such things as *selves*—individuals who persist over time—needs to be rejected as well.

The view I'm interested in falls between these extremes. It is conservative in that it accepts that brains give rise to selves that last over time, plan for the future, and so on. But it is radical in that it gives up the idea that there is just one self per head. The idea is that instead, within each brain, different selves are continually popping in and out of existence. They have different desires, and they fight for control—bargaining with, deceiving, and plotting against one another.

The notion of different selves within a single person is not new. It can be found in Plato, and it was nicely articulated by the 18th-century Scottish philosopher David Hume, who wrote, "I cannot compare the soul more properly to any thing than to a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination." Walt Whitman gave us a pithier version: "I am large, I contain multitudes."

The economist Thomas Schelling, another Nobel laureate, illustrates the concept with a simple story:

> As a boy I saw a movie about Admiral Byrd's Antarctic expedition and was impressed that as a boy he had gone outdoors in shirtsleeves to toughen himself against the cold. I resolved to go to bed at night with one blanket too few. That decision to go to bed minus one blanket was made by a warm boy; another boy awoke cold in the night, too cold to retrieve the blanket ... and resolving to restore it tomorrow. The next bedtime it was the warm boy again, dreaming of Antarctica, who got to make the decision, and he always did it again.

Examples abound in our own lives. Late at night, when deciding not to bother setting up the coffee machine for the next morning, I sometimes think of the man who will wake up as a different person, and wonder, *What did he ever do for me?* When I get up and there's no coffee ready, I curse the lazy bastard who shirked his duties the night before.

But anyone tempted by this theory has to admit just how wrong it feels, how poorly it fits with most of our experience. In the main, we do think of ourselves as singular individuals who persist over time. If I were to learn that I was going to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be tortured tomorrow morning, my reaction would be terror, not sympathy for the poor guy who will be living in my body then. If I do something terrible now, I will later feel guilt and shame, not anger at some other person.

It could hardly be otherwise. Our brains have evolved to protect our bodies and guide them to reproduce, hence our minds must be sensitive to maintaining the needs of the continuing body—my children today will be my children tomorrow; if you wronged me yesterday, I should be wary of you today. Society and human relationships would be impossible without this form of continuity. Anyone who could convince himself that the person who will wake up in his bed tomorrow is *really* someone different would lack the capacity for sustained self-interest; he would feel no long-term guilt, love, shame, or pride.

The multiplicity of selves becomes more intuitive as the time span increases. Social psychologists have found certain differences in how we think of ourselves versus how we think of other people—for instance, we tend to attribute our own bad behavior to unfortunate circumstances, and the bad behavior of others to their nature. But these biases diminish when we think of *distant* past selves or *distant* future selves; we see such selves the way we see other people. Although it might be hard to think about the person who will occupy your body tomorrow morning as someone other than you, it is not hard at all to think that way about the person who will occupy your body 20 years from now. This may be one reason why many young people are indifferent about saving for retirement; they feel as if they would be giving up their money to an elderly stranger.

MORE ONLINE

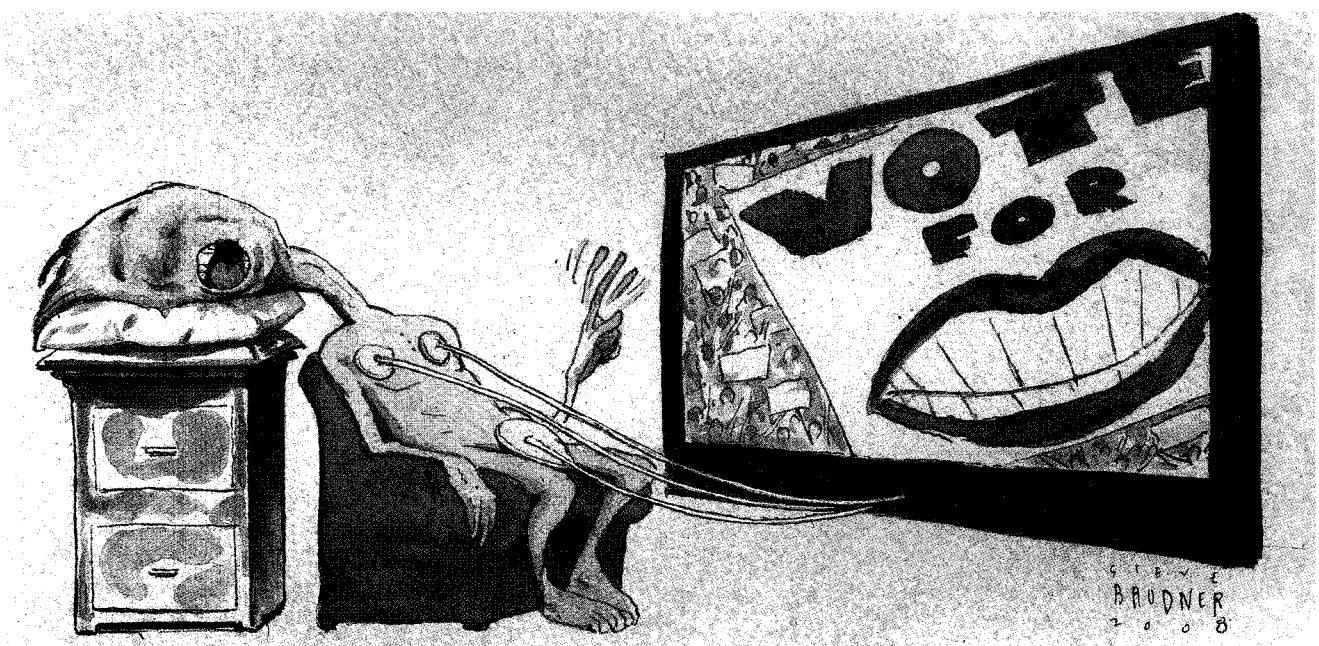
For an interview with Paul Bloom about the science of pleasure, visit www.theatlantic.com/pleasure.

THEATLANTIC.COM

One can see a version of clashing multiple selves in the mental illness known as dissociative-identity disorder, which used to be called multiple-personality disorder. This is familiar to everyone from the dramatic scenes in movies in which an actor is one person, and then he or she contorts or coughs or shakes the head, and—boom!—another person comes into existence. (My own favorite is Edward Norton in *Primal Fear*, although—spoiler alert—he turns out in the end to be faking.)

Dissociative-identity disorder is controversial. It used to be rarely diagnosed, then the number of reported cases spiked dramatically in the 1980s, particularly in North America. The spike has many possible explanations: the disorder was first included as a specific category in the 1980 version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, just as an influential set of case studies of multiple personalities was published. And increased popular interest was fueled by the 1973 novel *Sybil* and its 1976 movie adaptation, which starred Sally Field as a woman with 16 different personalities.

GALLERY VOTE NOW *by Steve Brodner*



"BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY ADVERTISERS NO LONGER ASSUMED RATIONALITY on the PART of THEIR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS, ADVERTISING BECAME ONE PART psychology, ONE PART AESTHETIC theory. REASON HAD TO move ITSELF TO OTHER AREAS."
Neil POSTMAN, Amusing OURSELVES TO DEATH—1985

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Some psychologists believe that this spike was not the result of better diagnosis. Rather, they say it stemmed in part from therapists who inadvertently persuaded their patients to *create* these distinct selves, often through role-playing and hypnosis. Recent years have seen a backlash, and some people diagnosed with the disorder have sued their therapists. One woman got a settlement of more than $2 million after alleging that her psychotherapist had used suggestive memory "recovery" techniques to convince her that she had more than 120 personalities, including children, angels, and a duck.

Regardless of the cause of the spike, considerable evidence, including recent brain-imaging studies, suggests that some people really do shift from one self to another, and that the selves have different memories and personalities. In one study, women who had been diagnosed with dissociative-identity disorder and claimed to be capable of shifting at will from one self to another listened to recordings while in a PET scanner. When the recordings told of a woman's own traumatic experience, the parts of the brain corresponding to autobiographic memory became active—but only when she had shifted to the self who had endured that traumatic experience. If she was in another self, different parts of the brain became active and showed a pattern of neural activity corresponding to hearing about the experience of a stranger.

Many psychologists and philosophers have argued that the disorder should be understood as an extreme version of normal multiplicity. Take memory. One characteristic of dissociative-identity disorder is interpersonality amnesia—one self doesn't have access to the memories of the other selves. But memory is notoriously situation-dependent even for normal people—remembering something is easiest while you are in the same state in which you originally experienced it. Students do better when they are tested in the room in which they learned the material; someone who learned something while he was angry is better at remembering that information when he is angry again; the experience of one's drunken self is more accessible to the drunk self than to the sober self. What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.

One self might predict that it will later be dominated by another self, and try to block the switch. The problem is that the other self has resources of its own.

Personality also changes according to situation; even the most thuggish teenager is not the same around his buddies as he is when having tea with Grandma. Our normal situation dependence is most evident when it comes to bad behavior. In the 1920s, Yale psychologists tested more than 10,000 children, giving them a battery of aptitude tests and putting them in morally dicey situations, such as having an opportunity to cheat on a test. They found a striking lack of consistency. A child's propensity to cheat at sports, for instance, had little to do with whether he or she would lie to a teacher.

More-recent experiments with adults find that subtle cues can have a surprising effect on our actions. Good smells, such as fresh bread, make people kinder and more likely to help a stranger; bad smells, like farts (the experimenters used fart spray from a novelty store), make people more judgmental. If you ask people to unscramble sentences, they tend to be more polite, minutes later, if the sentences contain positive words like *honor* rather than negative words like *bluntly*. These findings are in line with a set of classic experiments conducted by Stanley Milgram in the 1960s—too unethical to do now—showing that normal people could be induced to give electric shocks to a stranger if they were told to do so by someone they believed was an authoritative scientist. All of these studies support the view that each of us contains many selves—some violent, some submissive, some thoughtful—and that different selves can be brought to the fore by different situations.

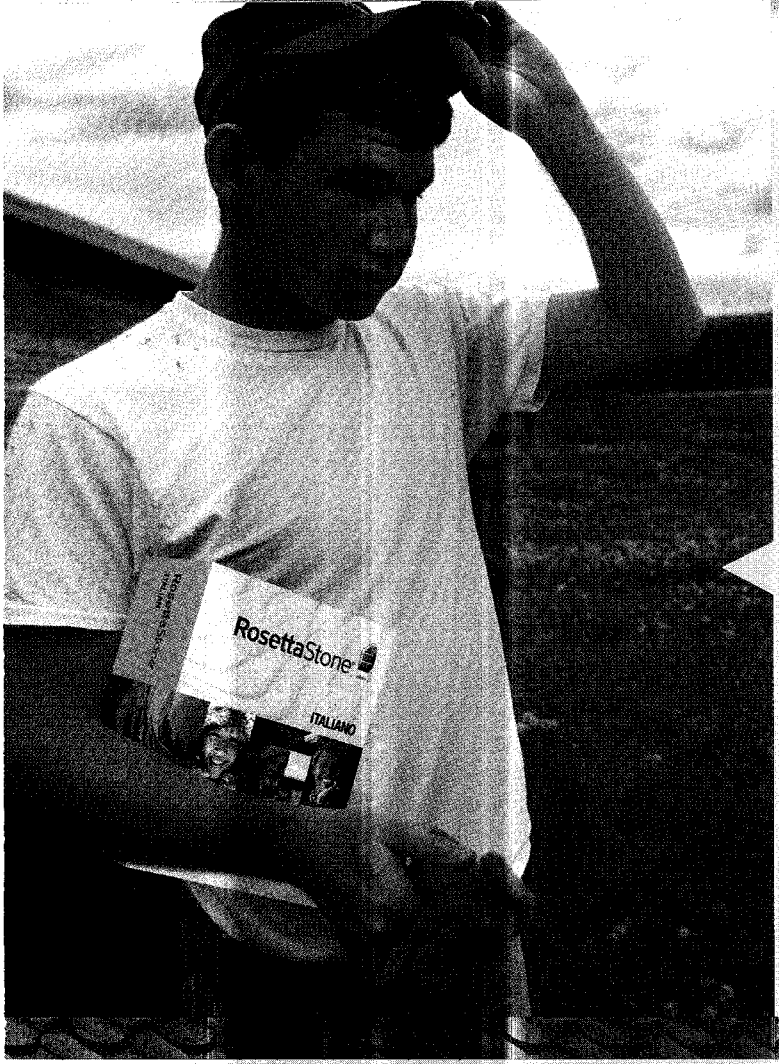
The population of a single head is not fixed; we can add more selves. In fact, the capacity to spawn multiple selves is central to pleasure. After all, the most common leisure activity is not sex, eating, drinking, drug use, socializing, sports, or being with the ones we love. It is, by a long shot, participating in experiences we know are not real—reading novels, watching movies and TV, daydreaming, and so forth.

Enjoying fiction requires a shift in selfhood. You give up your own identity and try on the identities of other people, adopting their perspectives so as to share their experiences. This allows us to enjoy fictional events that would shock and sadden us in real life. When Tony Soprano kills someone, you respond differently than you would to a real murder; you accept and adopt some of the moral premises of the Soprano universe. You become, if just for a moment, Tony Soprano.

Some imaginative pleasures involve the creation of alternative selves. Sometimes we interact with these selves as if they were other people. This might sound terrible, and it can be, as when schizophrenics hear voices that seem to come from outside themselves. But the usual version is harmless. In children, we describe these alternative selves as imaginary friends. The psychologist Marjorie Taylor, who has studied this phenomenon more than anyone, points out three things. First, contrary to some stereotypes, children who have imaginary friends are not losers, loners, or borderline psychotics. If anything, they are slightly more socially adept than other children. Second, the children are in no way deluded: Taylor has rarely met a child who wasn't fully aware that the character lived only in his or her own imagination. And third, the imaginary friends are genuinely different selves. They often have different desires, interests, and needs from the child's; they can be unruly, and can frustrate the child. The writer Adam Gopnik wrote about his young daughter's imaginary companion, Charlie Ravioli, a hip New Yorker whose defining quality was that he was always too busy to play with her.

Long-term imaginary companions are unusual in adults, but they do exist—Taylor finds that many authors who write books with recurring characters claim, fairly convincingly, that these characters have wills of their own and have some say in their fate. But it is not unusual to purposefully create

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



He was a hardworking farm boy.

She was an Italian supermodel.

He knew he would have just one chance to impress her.

The fastest and easiest way to learn ITALIAN.

Arabic • Chinese (Mandarin) **• Danish • Dutch • English** (American) **• English** (British) **• French • German • Greek • Hebrew • Hindi**
Indonesian • Italian • Irish • Japanese • Korean • Latin • Pashto • Persian (Farsi) **• Polish • Portuguese** (Brazil) **• Russian**
Spanish (Latin America) **• Spanish** (Spain) **• Swahili • Swedish • Tagalog** (Filipino) **• Thai • Turkish • Vietnamese • Welsh**

Only Rosetta Stone® uses **Dynamic Immersion®** to teach you a language quickly and efficiently without tedious translation, mindless memorization and boring grammar drills. It's the world's leading language-learning software.

- You'll experience **Dynamic Immersion** as you match real-world images to words spoken by native speakers so you'll find yourself engaged, and learn your second language like you learned your first... for a faster, easier way to learn.
- Our proprietary **Speech Recognition Technology** evaluates your speech and coaches you on more accurate pronunciation. You'll speak naturally.
- And only Rosetta Stone has **Adaptive Recall,**™ that brings back material to help you where you need it most, for more effective progress.

Plus, Rosetta Stone now offers Audio Companion™ to help you make even faster progress. Simply download the CDs to your audio or MP3 player and use Rosetta Stone on-the-go!

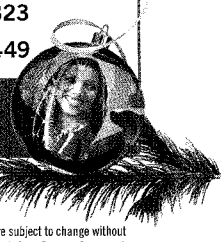
Get Rosetta Stone—**The Fastest Way to Learn a Language. Guaranteed.**®

SAVE 10%!

100% GUARANTEED
SIX-MONTH MONEY-BACK

Level 1	Reg. ~~$219~~	**NOW $197**
Level 1&2	Reg. ~~$359~~	**NOW $323**
Level 1,2&3	Reg. ~~$499~~	**NOW $449**

Give the Gift of Language.



©2008 Rosetta Stone Ltd. All rights reserved. Patent rights pending. Prices are subject to change without notice. Six-Month Money-Back offer is limited to product purchases made directly from Rosetta Stone and does not include return shipping. This offer does not apply to Rosetta Stone Online or Audio Companion™ purchased separately from the software product. All materials included with the product at the time of purchase must be returned together and undamaged to be eligible for any exchange or refund.

Call
(866) 409-0536

Online
RosettaStone.com/ams118

Use promotional code ams118 when ordering.
Offer expires February 28, 2009

RosettaStone®

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

another person in your head to interact with on a short-term basis. Much of daydreaming involves conjuring up people, sometimes as mere physical props (as when daydreaming about sports or sex), but usually as social beings. All of us from time to time hold conversations with people who are not actually there.

Sometimes we get pleasure from sampling alternative selves. Again, you can see the phenomenon in young children, who get a kick out of temporarily adopting the identity of a soldier or a lion. Adults get the same sort of kick; exploring alternative identities seems to be what the Internet was invented for. The sociologist Sherry Turkle has found that people commonly create avatars so as to explore their options in a relatively safe environment. She describes how one 16-year-old girl with an abusive father tried out multiple characters online—a 16-year-old boy, a stronger, more assertive girl—to try to work out what to do in the real world. But often the shift in identity is purely for pleasure. A man can have an alternate identity as a woman; a heterosexual can explore homosexuality; a shy person can try being the life of the party.

Online alternative worlds such as World of Warcraft and Second Life are growing in popularity, and some people now spend more time online than in the real world. One psychologist I know asked a research assistant to try out one of these worlds and report on what it is like and how people behave there. The young woman never came back—she preferred the virtual life to the real one.

FATHER ANDREWS

Jake, for the record, life does go on. Tuesday
gives way to Wednesday unremarkably.
The stars in their firmament behave like stars.
The morning traffic makes its mindless way
from one preoccupation to another.
Little changes. You knew as much yourself:
we have our day, and others after us
into their sparkling moment and out beyond.
We have our little say and then are silent.
But still, you met the mourners at the door,
and pressed the heavens with their lamentations
and tried to make some sense of all of it,
then saw them to the edge and home again—
the way we see you now, our level man,
out of the morning's worship into the sun,
the coach at the curb, and on your way again.

—Thomas Lynch

Thomas Lynch is the author of several books of poetry and prose, including The Undertaking: Life Studies From the Dismal Trade *(1997) and the forthcoming collection* Walking Papers *(2009).*

Life would be swell if all the selves inhabiting a single mind worked as a team, pulling together for a common goal. But they clash, and sometimes this gives rise to what we call addictions and compulsions.

This is not the traditional view of human frailty. The human condition has long been seen as a battle of good versus evil, reason versus emotion, will versus appetite, superego versus id. The iconic image, from a million movies and cartoons, is of a person with an angel over one shoulder and the devil over the other.

The alternative view keeps the angel and the devil, but casts aside the person in between. The competing selves are not over your shoulder, but inside your head: the angel and the devil, the self who wants to be slim and the one who wants to eat the cake, all exist within one person. Drawing on the research of the psychiatrist George Ainslie, we can make sense of the interaction of these selves by plotting their relative strengths over time, starting with one (the cake eater) being weaker than the other (the dieter). For most of the day, the dieter hums along at his regular power (a 5 on a scale of 1 to 10, say), motivated by the long-term goal of weight loss, and is stronger than the cake eater (a 2). Your consciousness tracks whichever self is winning, so *you* are deciding not to eat the cake. But as you get closer and closer to the cake, the power of the cake eater rises (3 ... 4 ...), the lines cross, the cake eater takes over (6), and that becomes the conscious *you*; at this point, you decide to eat the cake. It's as if a baton is passed from one self to another.

Sometimes one self can predict that it will later be dominated by another self, and it can act to block the crossing—an act known as self-binding, which Thomas Schelling and the philosopher Jon Elster have explored in detail. Self-binding means that the dominant self schemes against the person it might potentially become—the 5 acts to keep the 2 from becoming a 6. Ulysses wanted to hear the song of the sirens, but he knew it would compel him to walk off the boat and into the sea. So he had his sailors tie him to the mast. Dieters buy food in small portions so they won't overeat later on; smokers trying to quit tell their friends never to give them cigarettes, no matter how much they may later beg. In her book on gluttony, Francine Prose tells of women who phone hotels where they are going to stay to demand a room with an empty minibar. An alarm clock now for sale rolls away as it sounds the alarm; to shut it off, you have to get up out of bed and find the damn thing.

You might also triumph over your future self by feeding it incomplete or incorrect information. If you're afraid of panicking in a certain situation, you might deny yourself relevant knowledge—you don't look down when you're on the tightrope; you don't check your stocks if you're afraid you'll sell at the first sign of a downturn. Chronically late? Set your watch ahead. Prone to jealousy? Avoid conversations with your spouse about which of your friends is the sexiest.

Working with the psychologists Frank Keil, of Yale University, and Katherine Choe, now at Goucher College, I recently studied young children's understanding of self-binding, by showing them short movies of people engaged in self-binding and other behaviors and asking them to explain what was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

going on. The children, aged 4 to 7, easily grasped that someone might put a video game on a high shelf so that another person couldn't get it. But self-binding confused them: they were mystified when people put away the game so that they themselves couldn't get hold of it.

But even though young children don't understand self-binding, they are capable of doing it. In a classic study from the 1970s, psychologists offered children a marshmallow and told them they could either have it right away, or get more if they waited for a few minutes. As you would expect, waiting proved difficult (and performance on this task is a good predictor, much later on, of such things as SAT scores and drug problems), but some children managed it by self-binding—averting their eyes or covering the marshmallow so as to subvert their temptation-prone self for the greater pleasure of the long-term self.

Even pigeons can self-bind. Ainslie conducted an experiment in which he placed pigeons in front of a glowing red key. If they pecked it immediately, they got a small reward right away, but if they waited until the key went dark, they got a larger one. They almost always went for the quick reward—really, it's hard for a pigeon to restrain itself. But there was a wrinkle: the key glowed green for several seconds before turning red. Pecking the key while it was green would prevent it from turning red and providing the option of the small, quick reward. Some of the pigeons learned to use the green key to help themselves hold out for the big reward, just as a person might put temptation out of reach.

For adult humans, though, the problem is that the self you are trying to bind has resources of its own. Fighting your Bad Self is serious business; whole sections of bookstores are devoted to it. We bribe and threaten and cajole, just as if we were dealing with an addicted friend. Vague commitments like "I promise to drink only on special occasions" often fail, because the Bad Self can weasel out of them, rationalizing that it's *always* a special occasion. Bright-line rules like "I will never play video games again" are also vulnerable, because the Bad Self can argue that these are unreasonable—and, worse, once you slip, it can argue that the plan is unworkable. For every argument made by the dieting self—"This diet is really working" or "I really need to lose weight"—the cake eater can respond with another—"This will never work" or "I'm too vain" or "You only live once." Your long-term self reads voraciously about the benefits of regular exercise and healthy eating; the cake eater prefers articles showing that obesity isn't really such a problem. It's not that the flesh is weak; sometimes the flesh is pretty damn smart.

It used to be simpler. According to the traditional view, a single, long-term-planning self—a *you*—battles against passions, compulsions, impulses, and addictions. We have no problem choosing, as individuals or as a society, who should win, because only one interest is at stake—one person is at war with his or her desires. And while knowing the right thing to do can be terribly difficult, the decision is still based on the rational thoughts of a rational being.

Seeing things this way means we are often mistaken about what makes us happy. Consider again what happens when we have children. Pretty much no matter how you test it, children make us less happy. The evidence isn't just from diary studies; surveys of marital satisfaction show that couples tend to start off happy, get less happy when they have kids, and become happy again only once the kids leave the house. As the psychologist Daniel Gilbert puts it, "Despite what we read in the popular press, the only known symptom of 'empty-nest syndrome' is increased smiling." So why do people believe that children give them so much pleasure? Gilbert sees it as an illusion, a failure of affective forecasting. Society's needs are served when people believe that having children is a good thing, so we are deluged with images and stories about how wonderful kids are. We think they make us happy, though they actually don't.

The theory of multiple selves offers a different perspective. If struggles over happiness involve clashes between distinct internal selves, we can no longer be so sure that our conflicting judgments over time reflect irrationality or error. There is no inconsistency between someone's anxiously hiking through the Amazon wishing she were home in a warm bath and, weeks later, feeling good about being the sort of adventurous soul who goes into the rain forest. In an important sense, the person in the Amazon is not the same person as the one back home safely recalling the experience, just as the person who honestly believes that his children are the great joy in his life might not be the same person who finds them terribly annoying when he's actually with them.

Even if each of us is a community, all the members shouldn't get equal say. Some members are best thought of as small-minded children—and we don't give 6-year-olds the right to vote. Just as in society, the adults within us have the right—indeed, the obligation—to rein in the children. In fact, talk of "children" versus "adults" within an individual isn't only a metaphor; one reason to favor the longer-term self is that it really is older and more experienced. We typically spend more of our lives not wanting to snort coke, smoke, or overeat than we spend wanting to do these things; this means that the long-term self has more time to reflect. It is less selfish; it talks to other people, reads books, and so on. And it tries to control the short-term selves. It joins Alcoholics Anonymous, buys the runaway clock, and sees the therapist. As Jon Elster observes, the long-term, sober self is a truer self, because it tries to bind the short-term, drunk self. The long-term, sober self is the adult.

Governments and businesses, recognizing these tendencies, have started offering self-binding schemes. Thousands of compulsive gamblers in Missouri have chosen to sign contracts stating that if they ever enter a casino, anything they win will be confiscated by the state, and they could be arrested. Some of my colleagues at Yale have developed an online service whereby you set a goal and agree to put up a certain amount of money to try to ensure that you meet it. If you succeed, you pay nothing; if you fail, the money is given to charity—or, in a clever twist, to an organization you oppose. A liberal trying to lose a pound a week, for instance, can punish herself for missing her goal by having $100 donated to the George W. Bush Presidential Library.

The natural extension of this type of self-binding is what the economist Richard Thaler and the legal scholar Cass

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sunstein describe as "libertarian paternalism"—a movement to engineer situations so that people retain their choices (the libertarian part), but in such a way that these choices are biased to favor people's better selves (the paternalism part). For instance, many people fail to save enough money for the future; they find it too confusing or onerous to choose a retirement plan. Thaler and Sunstein suggest that the default be switched so that employees would automatically be enrolled in a savings plan, and would have to take action to opt out. A second example concerns the process of organ donation. When asked, most Americans say that they would wish to donate their organs if they were to become brain-dead from an accident—but only about half actually have their driver's license marked for donation, or carry an organ-donor card. Thaler and Sunstein have discussed a different idea: people could easily opt out of being a donor, but if they do nothing, they are assumed to consent. Such proposals are not merely academic musings; they are starting to influence law and policy, and might do so increasingly in the future. Both Thaler and Sunstein act as advisers to politicians and policy makers, most notably Barack Obama.

In Missouri, thousands of compulsive gamblers have chosen to sign contracts stating that if they enter a casino, their winnings will be confiscated by the state.

So what's not to like? There is a real appeal to anything that makes self-binding easier. As I write this article, I'm using a program that disables my network connections for a selected amount of time and does not allow me to switch them back on, thereby forcing me to actually write instead of checking my e-mail or reading blogs. A harsher (and more expensive) method, advised by the author of a self-help book, is to remove your Internet cable and FedEx it to yourself—guaranteeing a day without online distractions. One can also chemically boost the long-term self through drugs such as Adderall, which improves concentration and focus. The journalist Joshua Foer describes how it enabled him to write for hour-long chunks, far longer than he was usually capable of: "The part of my brain that makes me curious about whether I have new e-mails in my inbox apparently shut down."

It's more controversial, of course, when someone else does the binding. I wouldn't be very happy if my department chair forced me to take Adderall, or if the government fined me for being overweight and not trying to slim down (as Alabama is planning to do to some state employees). But some "other-binding" already exists—think of the mandatory waiting periods for getting a divorce or buying a gun. You are not prevented from eventually taking these actions, but you are forced to think them over, giving the contemplative self the chance to override the impulsive self. And since governments and businesses are constantly asking people to make choices (about precisely such things as whether to be an organ donor), they inevitably have to provide a default option. If decisions have to be made, why not structure them to be in individuals' and society's best interests?

The main problem with all of this is that the long-term self is not always right. Sometimes the short-term self should not be bound. Of course, most addictions are well worth getting rid of. When a mother becomes addicted to cocaine, the pleasure from the drug seems to hijack the neural system that would otherwise be devoted to bonding with her baby. It obviously makes sense here to bind the drug user, the short-term self. On the other hand, from a neural and psychological standpoint, a mother's love for her baby can also be seen as an addiction. But here binding would be strange and immoral; this addiction is a good one. Someone who becomes morbidly obese needs to do more self-binding, but an obsessive dieter might need to do less. We think one way about someone who gives up Internet porn to spend time building houses for the poor, and another way entirely about someone who successfully thwarts his short-term desire to play with his children so that he can devote more energy to making his second million. The long-term, contemplative self should not always win.

This is particularly true when it comes to morality. Many cruel acts are perpetrated by people who can't or don't control their short-term impulses or who act in certain ways—such as getting drunk—that lead to a dampening of the contemplative self. But evil acts are also committed by smart people who adopt carefully thought-out belief systems that allow them to ignore their more morally astute gut feelings. Many slave owners were rational men who used their intelligence to defend slavery, arguing that the institution was in the best interests of those who were enslaved, and that it was grounded in scripture: Africans were the descendants of Ham, condemned by God to be "servants unto servants." Terrorist acts such as suicide bombings are not typically carried out in an emotional frenzy; they are the consequences of deeply held belief systems and long-term deliberative planning. One of the grimmest examples of rationality gone bad can be found in the psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton's discussion of Nazi doctors. These men acted purposefully for years to distance themselves from their emotions, creating what Lifton describes as an "Auschwitz self" that enabled them to prevent any normal, unschooled human kindness from interfering with their jobs.

I wouldn't want to live next door to someone whose behavior was dominated by his short-term selves, and I wouldn't want to be such a person, either. But there is also something wrong with people who go too far in the other direction. We benefit, intellectually and personally, from the interplay between different selves, from the balance between long-term contemplation and short-term impulse. We should be wary about tipping the scales too far. The community of selves shouldn't be a democracy, but it shouldn't be a dictatorship, either. ■

Paul Bloom is a professor of psychology at Yale University and the author of Descartes' Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains What Makes Us Human. *He is working on a book about pleasure.*

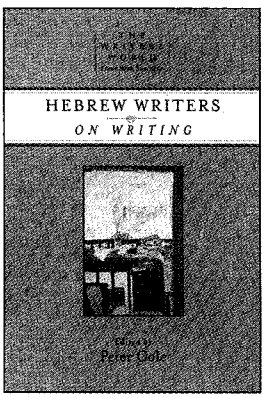
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

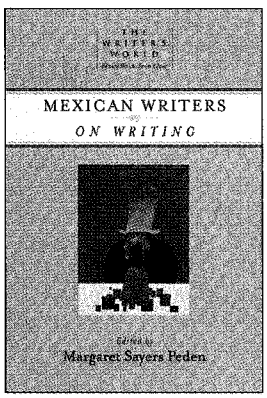
"A BRILLIANT PUBLISHING ENTERPRISE"

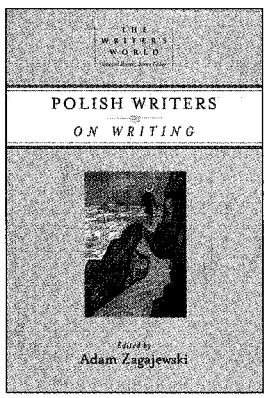
–Robert Pinksy

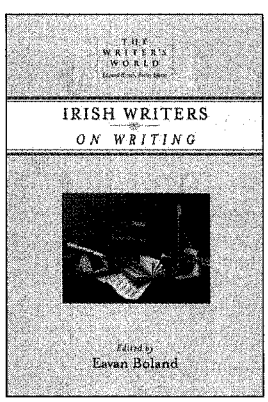
The Writer's World, edited by Edward Hirsch

This unprecedented series features the essays, letters, notebooks, poems, interviews, and other commentaries by the world's essential writers as they discuss what it means to write in their countries and their languages.









"In a time of clouds, anxieties, disasters, and blunders regarding our place among the nations, here is a beacon."
— *Robert Pinsky*

"Even as our political borders are growing more rigid and fiercely defended, these welcome books remind us of the ways in which literature will always cross the most seemingly impermeable barrier, and leap the highest wall."
— *Francine Prose*

"For all of our seeming differences and genuine divisions we are bound by words."
— *Christopher Merrill*

"Each book is like a conference of great writers and thinkers brought together to consider matters essential to culture and society."
— *C. K. Williams*

TRINITY UNIVERSITY PRESS

available at bookstores and online retailiers
www.trinity.edu/tupress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AIRPORT SECURITY *in America is a sham—"security theater" designed to make travelers feel better and catch stupid terrorists. Smart ones can get through security with fake boarding passes and all manner of prohibited items—as our correspondent did with ease.*

THE THINGS HE CARRIED

By Jeffrey Goldberg

DAVID HILLS

IF I WERE a terrorist, and I'm not, but if I were a terrorist—a frosty, tough-like-Chuck-Norris terrorist, say a C-title jihadist with Hezbollah or, more likely, a donkey-work operative with the Judean People's Front—I would not do what I did in the bathroom of the Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport, which was to place myself in front of a sink in open view of the male American flying public and ostentatiously rip up a sheaf of counterfeit boarding passes that had been created for me by a frenetic and acerbic security expert named Bruce Schneier. He had made these boarding passes in his sophisticated underground forgery works, which consists of a Sony VAIO laptop and an HP LaserJet printer, in order to prove that the Transportation Security Administration, which is meant to protect American aviation from al-Qaeda, represents an egregious waste of tax dollars, dollars that could otherwise be used to catch terrorists before they arrive at the Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport, by which time it is, generally speaking, too late.

I could have ripped up these counterfeit boarding passes in the privacy of a toilet stall, but I chose not to, partly because this was the renowned Senator Larry Craig Memorial Wide-Stance Bathroom, and since the commencement of the Global War on Terror this particular bathroom has been patrolled by security officials trying to protect it from gay sex, and partly because I wanted to see whether my fellow passengers would report me to the TSA for acting suspiciously in a public bathroom. No one did, thus thwarting, yet again, my plans to get arrested, or at least be the recipient of a thorough sweating by the FBI, for dubious behavior in a large American airport. Suspicious that the measures put in place after the attacks of September 11 to prevent further such attacks are almost entirely for show—*security theater* is the term of art—I have for some time now been testing, in modest ways, their effectiveness. Because the TSA's security regimen seems to be mainly thing-based—most of its 44,500 airport officers are assigned to truffle through carry-on bags for things like guns, bombs, three-ounce tubes of anthrax,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Crest toothpaste, nail clippers, Snapple, and so on—I focused my efforts on bringing bad things through security in many different airports, primarily my home airport, Washington's Reagan National, the one situated approximately 17 feet from the Pentagon, but also in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Chicago, and at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport (which is where I came closest to arousing at least a modest level of suspicion, receiving a symbolic pat-down—all frisks that avoid the sensitive regions are by definition symbolic—and one question about the presence of a Leatherman Multi-Tool in my pocket; said Leatherman was confiscated and is now, I hope, living with the loving family of a TSA employee). And because I have a fair amount of experience reporting on terrorists, and because terrorist groups produce large quantities of branded knickknacks, I've amassed an inspiring collection of al-Qaeda T-shirts, Islamic Jihad flags, Hezbollah videotapes, and inflatable Yasir Arafat dolls (really). All these things I've carried with me through airports across the country. I've also carried, at various times: pocketknives, matches from hotels in Beirut and Peshawar, dust masks, lengths of rope, cigarette lighters, nail clippers, eight-ounce tubes of toothpaste (in my front pocket), bottles of Fiji Water (which is *foreign*), and, of course, box cutters. I was selected for secondary screening four times—out of dozens of passages through security checkpoints—during this extended experiment. At one screening, I was relieved of a pair of nail clippers; during another, a can of shaving cream.

During one secondary inspection, at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, I was wearing under my shirt a spectacular, only-in-America device called a "Beerbelly," a neoprene sling that holds a polyurethane bladder and drinking tube. The Beerbelly, designed originally to sneak alcohol—up to 80 ounces—into football games, can quite obviously be used to sneak up to 80 ounces of liquid through airport security. (The company that manufactures the Beerbelly also makes something called a "Winerack," a bra that holds up to 25 ounces of booze and is recommended, according to the company's Web site, for PTA meetings.) My Beerbelly, which fit comfortably over my beer belly, contained two cans' worth of Bud Light at the time of the inspection. It went undetected. The eight-ounce bottle of water in my carry-on bag, however, was seized by the federal government.

Just a few things I've carried through security at U.S. airports: pocketknives, cigarette lighters, matches, dust masks, rope, and inflatable Yasir Arafat dolls.

On another occasion, at LaGuardia, in New York, the transportation-security officer in charge of my secondary screening emptied my carry-on bag of nearly everything it contained, including a yellow, three-foot-by-four-foot Hezbollah flag, purchased at a Hezbollah gift shop in south Lebanon. The flag features, as its charming main image, an upraised fist clutching an AK-47 automatic rifle. Atop the rifle is a line of Arabic writing that reads THEN SURELY THE PARTY OF GOD ARE THEY WHO WILL BE TRIUMPHANT. The officer took the flag and spread it out on the inspection table. She finished her inspection, gave me back my flag, and told me I could go. I said, "That's a Hezbollah flag." She said, "Uh-huh." Not "Uh-huh, I've been trained to recognize the symbols of anti-American terror groups, but after careful inspection of your physical person, your behavior, and your last name, I've come to the conclusion that you are not a Bekaa Valley–trained threat to the United States commercial aviation system," but "Uh-huh, I'm going on break, why are you talking to me?"

In Minneapolis, I littered my carry-on with many of my prohibited items, and also an OSAMA BIN LADEN, HERO OF ISLAM T-shirt, which often gets a rise out of people who see it. This day, however, would feature a different sort of experiment, designed to prove not only that the TSA often cannot find anything on you or in your carry-on, but that it has no actual idea who you are, despite the government's effort to build a comprehensive "no-fly" list. A no-fly list would be a good idea if it worked; Bruce Schneier's homemade boarding passes were about to prove that it doesn't. Schneier is the TSA's most relentless, and effective, critic; the TSA director, Kip Hawley, told me he respects Schneier's opinions, though Schneier quite clearly makes his life miserable.

"The whole system is designed to catch stupid terrorists," Schneier told me. A smart terrorist, he says, won't try to bring a knife aboard a plane, as I had been doing; he'll make his own, in the airplane bathroom. Schneier told me the recipe: "Get some steel epoxy glue at a hardware store. It comes in two tubes, one with steel dust and then a hardener. You make the mold by folding a piece of cardboard in two, and then you mix the two tubes together. You can use a metal spoon for the handle. It hardens in 15 minutes."

As we stood at an airport Starbucks, Schneier spread before me a batch of fabricated boarding passes for Northwest Airlines flight 1714, scheduled to depart at 2:20 p.m. and arrive at Reagan National at 5:47 p.m. He had taken the liberty of upgrading us to first class, and had even granted me "Platinum/Elite Plus" status, which was gracious of him. This status would allow us to skip the ranks of hoi-polloi flyers and join the expedited line, which is my preference, because those knotty, teeming security lines are the most dangerous places in airports: terrorists could paralyze U.S. aviation merely by detonating a bomb at any security checkpoint, all of which are, of course, entirely unsecured. (I once asked Michael Chertoff, the secretary of Homeland Security, about this. "We actually ultimately do have a vision of trying to move the security checkpoint away from the gate, deeper into the airport itself, but there's always going to be some place that people congregate. So if you're asking me, is there any way to protect against a person taking a bomb into a crowded location and blowing it up, the answer is no.")

Schneier and I walked to the security checkpoint. "Counterterrorism in the airport is a show designed to make people feel better," he said. "Only two things have made flying safer: the reinforcement of cockpit doors, and the fact that passengers know now to resist hijackers." This assumes, of course, that al-Qaeda will target airplanes for hijacking,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or target aviation at all. "We defend against what the terrorists did last week," Schneier said. He believes that the country would be just as safe as it is today if airport security were rolled back to pre-9/11 levels. "Spend the rest of your money on intelligence, investigations, and emergency response."

Schneier and I joined the line with our ersatz boarding passes. "Technically we could get arrested for this," he said, but we judged the risk to be acceptable. We handed our boarding passes and IDs to the security officer, who inspected our driver's licenses through a loupe, one of those magnifying-glass devices jewelers use for minute examinations of fine detail. This was the moment of maximum peril, not because the boarding passes were flawed, but because the TSA now trains its officers in the science of behavior detection. The SPOT program—"Screening of Passengers by Observation Techniques"—was based in part on the work of a psychologist who believes that involuntary facial-muscle movements, including the most fleeting "micro-expressions," can betray lying or criminality. The training program for behavior-detection officers is one week long. Our facial muscles did not cooperate with the SPOT program, apparently, because the officer chicken-scratched onto our boarding passes what might have been his signature, or the number *4*, or the letter *y*. We took our shoes off and placed our laptops in bins. Schneier took from his bag a 12-ounce container labeled "saline solution."

The author's forged boarding pass—complete with Platinum/Elite Plus status and magical TSA-approval squiggle—got him through security.

"It's allowed," he said. Medical supplies, such as saline solution for contact-lens cleaning, don't fall under the TSA's three-ounce rule.

"What's allowed?" I asked. "Saline solution, or bottles labeled saline solution?"

"Bottles labeled saline solution. They won't check what's in it, trust me."

They did not check. As we gathered our belongings, Schneier held up the bottle and said to the nearest security officer, "This is okay, right?" "Yep," the officer said. "Just have to put it in the tray."

"Maybe if you lit it on fire, he'd pay attention," I said, risking arrest for making a joke at airport security. (Later, Schneier would carry two bottles labeled saline solution—24 ounces in total—through security. An officer asked him why he needed two bottles. "Two eyes," he said. He was allowed to keep the bottles.)

We were in the clear. But what did we prove?

"We proved that the ID triangle is hopeless," Schneier said.

The ID triangle: before a passenger boards a commercial flight, he interacts with his airline or the government three times—when he purchases his ticket; when he passes through airport security; and finally at the gate, when he presents his boarding pass to an airline agent. It is at the first point of contact, when the ticket is purchased, that a passenger's name is checked against the government's no-fly list. It is not checked again, and for this reason, Schneier argued, the process is merely another form of security theater.

"The goal is to make sure that this ID triangle represents one person," he explained. "Here's how you get around it. Let's assume you're a terrorist and you believe your name is on the watch list." It's easy for a terrorist to check whether the government has cottoned on to his existence, Schneier said; he simply has to submit his name online to the new, privately run CLEAR program, which is meant to fast-pass approved travelers through security. If the terrorist is rejected, then he knows he's on the watch list.

To slip through the only check against the no-fly list, the terrorist uses a stolen credit card to buy a ticket under a fake name. "Then you print a fake boarding pass with your real name on it and go to the airport. You give your real ID, and the fake boarding pass with your real name on it, to security. They're checking the documents against each other. They're not checking your name against the no-fly list—that was done on the airline's computers. Once you're through security, you rip up the fake boarding pass, and use the real boarding pass that has the name from the stolen credit card. Then you board the plane, because they're not checking your name against your ID at boarding."

What if you don't know how to steal a credit card?

"Then you're a stupid terrorist and the government will catch you," he said.

DAVID HILLS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What if you don't know how to download a PDF of an actual boarding pass and alter it on a home computer?

"Then you're a stupid terrorist and the government will catch you."

I couldn't believe that what Schneier was saying was true—in the national debate over the no-fly list, it is seldom, if ever, mentioned that the no-fly list *doesn't work*. "It's true," he said. "The gap blows the whole system out of the water."

This called for a visit to TSA headquarters. The headquarters is located in Pentagon City, just outside Washington. Kip Hawley, the man who runs the agency, is a bluff, amiable fellow who is capable of making a TSA joke. "Do you want three ounces of water?" he asked me.

I raised the subject of the ID triangle, hoping to get a cogent explanation. This is what Hawley said: "The TDC"—that's "ticket document checker"—"will make a notation on your ticket and that's something that will follow you all the way through" to the gate.

"But all they do is write a little squiggly mark on the boarding pass," I said.

"You think you might be able to forge that?" he asked me.

"My handwriting is terrible, but don't you think someone can forge it?" I asked.

"Well, uh, maybe. Maybe not," he said.

Aha! I thought. *He's hiding something from me.*

"Are you telling me that I don't know about something that's going on?" I asked.

"We're well aware of the scenario you describe. Bruce has been talking about it for two years," he said, referring to Schneier's efforts to publicize the gaps in the ID triangle.

"Isn't it a basic flaw, that you're checking the no-fly list at the point of purchase, not at the airport?"

He leaned back in his chair.

"What do you do about vulnerabilities?" he asked, rhetorically. "All the time you hear reports and people saying, 'There's a vulnerability.' Well, duh. There are vulnerabilities everywhere, in everything. The question is not 'Is there a vulnerability?' It's 'What are you doing about it?' "

Well, what are you doing about it?

"There are vulnerabilities where you have limited ways to address it directly. So you have to put other layers around it, other things that will catch them when that vulnerability is breached. This is a universal problem. Somebody will identify a very small thing and drill down and say, 'I found a vulnerability.' "

In other words, the TSA has no immediate plans to check passengers against the no-fly list at the moment before they board their flight. (Hawley said that boarding passes will eventually be encrypted so the TSA can follow their progress from printer to gate.) Nor does it plan to screen airport employees when they show up for work each day. Pilots—or people dressed as pilots—are screened, as the public knows, but that's because they enter the airport through the front door. The employees who drive fuel trucks, and make french fries at McDonald's, and clean airplane bathrooms (to the extent that they're cleaned anymore) do not pass through magnetometers when they enter the airport, and their possessions are not searched. To me this always seemed to be, well, another "vulnerability."

"Do you know what you have on the inside of an airport?" Hawley asked me. "You have all the military traveling, you have guns, chemicals, jet fuel. So the idea that we would spend a whole lot of resources putting a perimeter around that, running every worker, 50,000 people, every day, through security—why in the heck would you do that? Because all they have to do is walk through clean and then have someone throw something over a fence."

I asked about the depth of background screening for airport employees. He said, noncommittally, "It goes reasonably deep."

So there are, in other words, two classes of people in airports: those whose shoes are inspected for explosives, and those whose aren't. How, I asked, do you explain that to the public in a way that makes sense?

"Social networks," he answered. "It's a very tuned-in workforce. You're never alone when you're on or around a plane. 'What is that guy spending all that time in the cockpit for?' All airport employees know what normal is." Hawley did say that TSA employees conduct random ID checks and magnetometer screenings, but he did not say how frequently.

I suppose I've seen too many movies, but, really? Social networks? Behavior detection? The TSA budget is almost $7 billion. That money would be better spent on the penetration of al-Qaeda social networks.

As I stood in the bathroom, ripping up boarding passes, waiting for the social network of male bathroom users to report my suspicious behavior, I decided to make myself as nervous as possible. I would try to pass through security with no ID, a fake boarding pass, and an Osama bin Laden T-shirt under my coat. I splashed water on my face to mimic sweat, put on a coat (it was a summer day), hid my driver's license, and approached security with a bogus boarding pass that Schneier had made for me. I told the document checker at security that I had lost my identification but was hoping I would still be able to make my flight. He said I'd have to speak to a supervisor. The supervisor arrived; he looked smart, unfortunately. I was starting to get genuinely nervous, which I hoped would generate incriminating micro-expressions. "I can't find my driver's license," I said. I showed him my fake boarding pass. "I need to get to Washington quickly," I added. He asked me if I had any other identification. I showed him a credit card with my name on it, a library card, and a health-insurance card. "Nothing else?" he asked.

"No," I said.

"You should really travel with a second picture ID, you know."

"Yes, sir," I said.

"All right, you can go," he said, pointing me to the X-ray line. "But let this be a lesson for you." ∎

Jeffrey Goldberg, an Atlantic *national correspondent and the author of* Prisoners: A Story of Friendship and Terror (2007), *blogs at jeffreygoldberg.theatlantic.com.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PAUL FREDRICK
MENSTYLE

Crisp, comfortable white *100% Cotton* *Pinpoint Oxford* dress shirt at a

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY PRICE...

$19.95

Reg. $39.50-$49.50

Plus, **FREE** monogramming!
(an $8.50 value)

Add this Multi Color Basketweave Necktie for only $19.95!
Item #THC1524
(Regularly $49.50)

Your Collar Style: Six Collar Choices.

Your Cuff: Button or French Cuff.

Your Fit: Regular, Big & Tall or Trim.

Your Size: 14½" x 32" to 20" x 37".

Specify promotional code ***T8HSAT***.
New customer offer. Limit four shirts per customer. Shipping charges extra. Cannot be combined with other offers. Expires 12/31/08.

Order Today! Call 1-800-247-1417 or visit PaulFredrick.com/special

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOR CENTURIES, WRITERS *have experimented with forms that evoke the imperfection of thought, the inconstancy of human affairs, and the chastening passage of time. But as blogging evolves as a literary form, it is generating a new and quintessentially postmodern idiom that's enabling writers to express themselves in ways that have never been seen or understood before. Its truths are provisional, and its ethos collective and messy. Yet the interaction it enables between writer and reader is unprecedented, visceral, and sometimes brutal. And make no mistake: it heralds a golden era for journalism.*

WHY I

THE WORD *blog* is a conflation of two words: *Web* and *log*. It contains in its four letters a concise and accurate self-description: it is a log of thoughts and writing posted publicly on the World Wide Web. In the monosyllabic vernacular of the Internet, *Web log* soon became the word *blog*.

This form of instant and global self-publishing, made possible by technology widely available only for the past decade or so, allows for no retroactive editing (apart from fixing minor typos or small glitches) and removes from the act of writing any considered or lengthy review. It is the spontaneous expression of instant thought—impermanent beyond even the ephemera of daily journalism. It is accountable in immediate and unavoidable ways to readers and other bloggers, and linked via hypertext to continuously multiplying references and sources. Unlike any single piece of print journalism, its borders are extremely porous and its truth inherently transitory. The consequences of this for the act of writing are still sinking in.

A ship's log owes its name to a small wooden board, often weighted with lead, that was for centuries attached to a line and thrown over the stern. The weight of the log would keep it in the same place in the water, like a provisional anchor, while the ship moved away. By measuring the length of line used up in a set period of time, mariners could calculate the speed of their journey (the rope itself was marked by equidistant "knots" for easy measurement). As a ship's voyage progressed, the course came to be marked down in a book that was called a log.

In journeys at sea that took place before radio or radar or satellites or sonar, these logs were an indispensable source for recording what actually happened. They helped navigators surmise where they were and how far they had traveled and how much longer they had to stay at sea. They provided accountability to a ship's owners and traders. They were designed to be as immune to faking as possible. Away from land, there was usually no reliable corroboration of events apart from the crew's own account in the middle of an expanse of blue and gray and green; and in long journeys, mem-

TREY RATCLIFFE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ories always blur and facts disperse. A log provided as accurate an account as could be gleaned in real time.

As you read a log, you have the curious sense of moving backward in time as you move forward in pages—the opposite of a book. As you piece together a narrative that was never intended as one, it seems—and is—more truthful. Logs, in this sense, were a form of human self-correction. They amended for hindsight, for the ways in which human beings order and tidy and construct the story of their lives as they look back on them. Logs require a letting-go of narrative because they do not allow for a knowledge of the ending. So they have plot as well as dramatic irony—the reader will know the ending before the writer did.

Anyone who has blogged his thoughts for an extended time will recognize this world. We bloggers have scant opportunity to collect our thoughts, to wait until events have settled and a clear pattern emerges. We blog now—as news reaches us, as facts emerge. This is partly true for all journalism, which is, as its etymology suggests, daily writing, always subject to subsequent revision. And a good columnist will adjust position and judgment and even political loyalty over time, depending on events. But a blog is not so much daily writing as hourly writing. And with that level of timeliness, the provisionality of every word is even more pressing—and the risk of error or the thrill of prescience that much greater.

Blogging is to writing what extreme sports are to athletics: more free-form, more accident-prone, less formal, more alive. Blogging is writing out loud.

No columnist or reporter or novelist will have his minute shifts or constant small contradictions exposed as mercilessly as a blogger's are. A columnist can ignore or duck a subject less noticeably than a blogger committing thoughts to pixels several times a day. A reporter can wait—must wait—until every source has confirmed. A novelist can spend months or years before committing words to the world. For bloggers, the deadline is always now. Blogging is therefore to writing what extreme sports are to athletics: more free-form, more accident-prone, less formal, more alive. It is, in many ways, writing out loud.

You end up writing about yourself, since you are a relatively fixed point in this constant interaction with the ideas and facts of the exterior world. And in this sense, the historic form closest to blogs is the diary. But with this difference: a diary is almost always a private matter. Its raw honesty, its dedication to marking life as it happens and remembering life as it was, makes it a terrestrial log. A few diaries are meant to be read by others, of course, just as correspondence could be—but usually posthumously, or as a way to compile facts for a more considered autobiographical rendering. But a blog, unlike a diary, is instantly public. It transforms this most personal and retrospective of forms into a painfully public and immediate one. It combines the confessional genre with the log form and exposes the author in a manner no author has ever been exposed before.

MORE ONLINE

For a video discussion between Andrew Sullivan and fellow Atlantic *blogger Marc Ambinder about the blogging life, visit www.theatlantic.com/blogging.*

THEATLANTIC.COM

I remember first grappling with what to put on my blog. It was the spring of 2000 and, like many a freelance writer at the time, I had some vague notion that I needed to have a presence "online." I had no clear idea of what to do, but a friend who ran a Web-design company offered to create a site for me, and, since I was technologically clueless, he also agreed to post various essays and columns as I wrote them. Before too long, this became a chore for him, and he called me one day to say he'd found an online platform that was so simple I could henceforth post all my writing myself. The platform was called Blogger.

As I used it to post columns or links to books or old essays, it occurred to me that I could also post new writing—writing that could even be exclusive to the blog. But what? Like any new form, blogging did not start from nothing. It evolved from various journalistic traditions. In my case, I drew on my mainstream-media experience to navigate the virgin sea. I had a few early inspirations: the old Notebook section of *The New Republic*, a magazine that, under the editorial guidance of Michael Kinsley, had introduced a more English style of crisp, short commentary into what had been a more high-minded genre of American opinion writing. *The New Republic* had also pioneered a Diarist feature on the last page, which was designed to be a more personal, essayistic, first-person form of journalism. Mixing the two genres, I did what I had been trained to do—and improvised.

I'd previously written online as well, contributing to a listserv for gay writers and helping Kinsley initiate a more discursive form of online writing for *Slate*, the first magazine published exclusively on the Web. As soon as I began writing this way, I realized that the online form rewarded a colloquial, unfinished tone. In one of my early Kinsley-guided experiments, he urged me not to think too hard before writing. So I wrote as I'd write an e-mail—with only a mite more circumspection. This is hazardous, of course, as anyone who has ever clicked Send in a fit of anger or hurt will testify. But blogging requires an embrace of such hazards, a willingness to fall off the trapeze rather than fail to make the leap.

From the first few days of using the form, I was hooked. The simple experience of being able to directly broadcast my own words to readers was an exhilarating literary liberation. Unlike the current generation of writers, who have only ever blogged, I knew firsthand what the alternative meant. I'd edited a weekly print magazine, *The New Republic*, for five years, and written countless columns and essays for a variety of traditional outlets. And in all this, I'd often chafed, as most writers do, at the endless delays, revisions, office politics, editorial fights, and last-minute cuts for space that dead-tree publishing entails. Blogging—even to an audience of a few hundred in the early days—was intoxicatingly free in comparison. Like taking a narcotic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was obvious from the start that it was revolutionary. Every writer since the printing press has longed for a means to publish himself and reach—instantly—any reader on Earth. Every professional writer has paid some dues waiting for an editor's nod, or enduring a publisher's incompetence, or being ground to literary dust by a legion of fact-checkers and copy editors. If you added up the time a writer once had to spend finding an outlet, impressing editors, sucking up to proprietors, and proofreading edits, you'd find another lifetime buried in the interstices. But with one click of the Publish Now button, all these troubles evaporated.

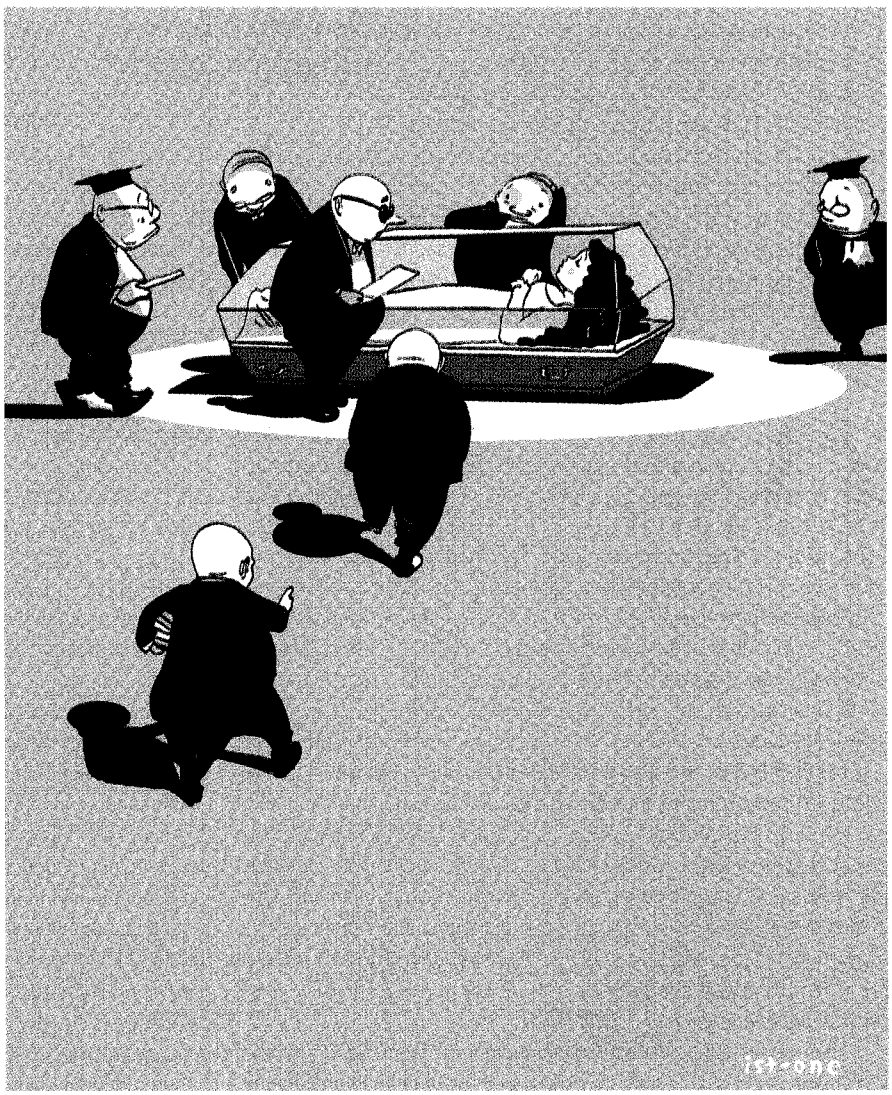
Alas, as I soon discovered, this sudden freedom from above was immediately replaced by insurrection from below. Within minutes of my posting something, even in the earliest days, readers responded. E-mail seemed to unleash their inner beast. They were more brutal than any editor, more persnickety than any copy editor, and more emotionally unstable than any colleague.

Again, it's hard to overrate how different this is. Writers can be sensitive, vain souls, requiring gentle nurturing from editors, and oddly susceptible to the blows delivered by reviewers. They survive, for the most part, but the thinness of their skins is legendary. Moreover, before the blogosphere, reporters and columnists were largely shielded from this kind of direct hazing. Yes, letters to the editor would arrive in due course and subscriptions would be canceled. But reporters and columnists tended to operate in a relative sanctuary, answerable mainly to their editors, not readers. For a long time, columns were essentially monologues published to applause, muffled murmurs, silence, or a distant heckle. I'd gotten blowback from pieces before—but in an amorphous, time-delayed, distant way. Now the feedback was instant, personal, and brutal.

And so blogging found its own answer to the defensive counterblast from the journalistic establishment. To the charges of inaccuracy and unprofessionalism, bloggers could point to the fierce, immediate scrutiny of their readers. Unlike newspapers, which would eventually publish corrections in a box of printed spinach far from the original error, bloggers had to walk the walk of self-correction in the same space and in the same format as the original screwup. The form was more accountable, not less, because there is nothing more conducive to professionalism than being publicly humiliated for sloppiness. Of course, a blogger could ignore an error or simply refuse to acknowledge mistakes. But if he persisted, he would be razzed by competitors and assailed by commenters and abandoned by readers. In an era when the traditional media found itself beset by scandals as disparate as Stephen Glass, Jayson Blair, and Dan Rather, bloggers survived the first assault on their worth. In time, in fact, the high standards expected of well-trafficked bloggers spilled over into greater accountability, transparency, and punctiliousness among the media powers that were. Even *New York Times* columnists were forced to admit when they had been wrong.

The blog remained a superficial medium, of course. By *superficial*, I mean simply that blogging rewards brevity and immediacy. No one wants to read a 9,000-word treatise online. On the Web, one-sentence links are as legitimate as thousand-word diatribes—in fact, they are often valued more. And, as Matt Drudge told me when I sought advice from the master in 2001, the key to understanding a blog is to realize

GALLERY FAIRY TALE *by Istvan Banyai*



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that it's a broadcast, not a publication. If it stops moving, it dies. If it stops paddling, it sinks.

But the superficiality masked considerable depth—greater depth, from one perspective, than the traditional media could offer. The reason was a single technological innovation: the hyperlink. An old-school columnist can write 800 brilliant words analyzing or commenting on, say, a new think-tank report or scientific survey. But in reading it on paper, you have to take the columnist's presentation of the material on faith, or be convinced by a brief quotation (which can always be misleading out of context). Online, a hyperlink to the original source transforms the experience. Yes, a few sentences of bloggy spin may not be as satisfying as a full column, but the ability to read the primary material instantly—in as careful or shallow a fashion as you choose—can add much greater context than anything on paper. Even a blogger's chosen pull quote, unlike a columnist's, can be effortlessly checked against the original. Now this innovation, pre-dating blogs but popularized by them, is increasingly central to mainstream journalism.

A blog, therefore, bobs on the surface of the ocean but has its anchorage in waters deeper than those print media is technologically able to exploit. It disempowers the writer to that extent, of course. The blogger can get away with less and afford fewer pretensions of authority. He is—more than any writer of the past—a node among other nodes, connected but unfinished without the links and the comments and the trackbacks that make the blogosphere, at its best, a conversation, rather than a production.

You have to express yourself now, while your emotions roil, while your temper flares, while your humor lasts. You can't have blogger's block.

A writer fully aware of and at ease with the provisionality of his own work is nothing new. For centuries, writers have experimented with forms that suggest the imperfection of human thought, the inconstancy of human affairs, and the humbling, chastening passage of time. If you compare the meandering, questioning, unresolved dialogues of Plato with the definitive, logical treatises of Aristotle, you see the difference between a skeptic's spirit translated into writing and a spirit that seeks to bring some finality to the argument. Perhaps the greatest single piece of Christian apologetics, Pascal's *Pensées*, is a series of meandering, short, and incomplete stabs at arguments, observations, insights. Their lack of finish is what makes them so compelling—arguably more compelling than a polished treatise by Aquinas.

Or take the brilliant polemics of Karl Kraus, the publisher of and main writer for *Die Fackel*, who delighted in constantly twitting authority with slashing aphorisms and rapid-fire bursts of invective. Kraus had something rare in his day: the financial wherewithal to self-publish. It gave him a fearlessness that is now available to anyone who can afford a computer and an Internet connection.

But perhaps the quintessential blogger *avant la lettre* was Montaigne. His essays were published in three major editions, each one longer and more complex than the previous. A passionate skeptic, Montaigne amended, added to, and amplified the essays for each edition, making them three-dimensional through time. In the best modern translations, each essay is annotated, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, by small letters (A, B, and C) for each major edition, helping the reader see how each rewrite added to or subverted, emphasized or ironized, the version before. Montaigne was living his skepticism, daring to show how a writer evolves, changes his mind, learns new things, shifts perspectives, grows older—and that this, far from being something that needs to be hidden behind a veneer of unchanging authority, can become a virtue, a new way of looking at the pretensions of authorship and text and truth. Montaigne, for good measure, also peppered his essays with myriads of what bloggers would call external links. His own thoughts are strewn with and complicated by the aphorisms and anecdotes of others. Scholars of the sources note that many of these "money quotes" were deliberately taken out of context, adding layers of irony to writing that was already saturated in empirical doubt.

To blog is therefore to let go of your writing in a way, to hold it at arm's length, open it to scrutiny, allow it to float in the ether for a while, and to let others, as Montaigne did, pivot you toward relative truth. A blogger will notice this almost immediately upon starting. Some e-mailers, unsurprisingly, know more about a subject than the blogger does. They will send links, stories, and facts, challenging the blogger's view of the world, sometimes outright refuting it, but more frequently adding context and nuance and complexity to an idea. The role of a blogger is not to defend against this but to embrace it. He is similar in this way to the host of a dinner party. He can provoke discussion or take a position, even passionately, but he also must create an atmosphere in which others want to participate.

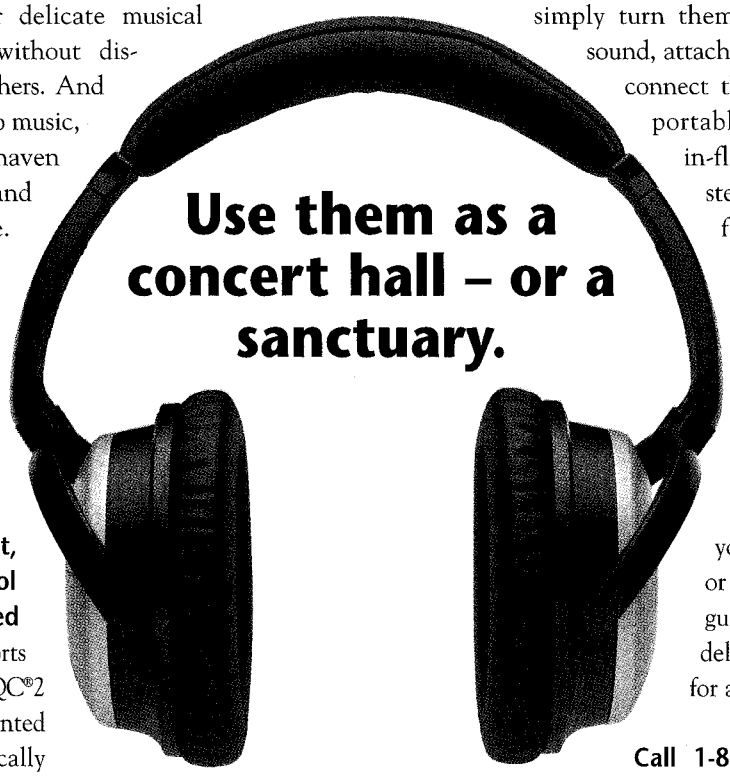
That atmosphere will inevitably be formed by the blogger's personality. The blogosphere may, in fact, be the least veiled of any forum in which a writer dares to express himself. Even the most careful and self-aware blogger will reveal more about himself than he wants to in a few unguarded sentences and publish them before he has the sense to hit Delete. The wise panic that can paralyze a writer—the fear that he will be exposed, undone, humiliated—is not available to a blogger. You can't have blogger's block. You have to express yourself now, while your emotions roil, while your temper flares, while your humor lasts. You can try to hide yourself from real scrutiny, and the exposure it demands, but it's hard. And that's what makes blogging as a form stand out: it is rich in personality. The faux intimacy of the Web experience, the closeness of the e-mail and the instant message, seeps through. You feel as if you know bloggers as they go through their lives, experience the same things you are experiencing, and share the moment. When readers of my blog bump into me in person, they invariably address me as Andrew. Print readers don't do that. It's Mr. Sullivan to them.

On my blog, my readers and I experienced 9/11 together, in real time. I can look back and see not just how I responded

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Bose® QuietComfort® 2 Acoustic Noise Cancelling® Headphones.

Think of them as a peaceful getaway from the world around you. Whether it's the engine roar inside an airplane cabin, the bustle of the city or the distractions in the office, Bose QuietComfort 2 headphones help them fade softly into the background with the flick of a switch. You can savor delicate musical nuances without disturbing others. And when you're not listening to music, you can slip into a tranquil haven – where you can relax and enjoy peace and solitude. Clearly, these are no ordinary headphones. It's no exaggeration to say they're one of those things you have to experience to believe.



Use them as a concert hall – or a sanctuary.

"It's as if someone behind your back reached out, found the volume control for the world, and turned it way, way, down," reports *TechnologyReview.com*. Bose QC®2 headphones incorporate patented technology that electronically identifies and dramatically reduces noise, while faithfully preserving the music, movie dialogue or tranquility you desire. We designed these headphones primarily for airplane travelers. But owners soon started telling us how much they enjoy using them in other places to reduce distractions around them. They're excellent for listening to music whether you're on the go, at home or in the office.

"Forget 'concertlike' comparisons; you'll think you're onstage with the band." That's what *Travel + Leisure Golf* said when these headphones were first introduced. You'll relish the sound of a bass guitar. Or a flute. Or the delicate inflections of a singing voice. The audio is so clear you may find yourself discovering new subtleties in even your favorite music.

"The QuietComfort 2 lives up to its name, enveloping you in blissful sound in the utmost comfort. It's easy to forget they are on your head." That's what respected columnist Rich Warren reports. To enjoy peace and tranquility, simply turn them on. To add Bose quality sound, attach the included audio cord and connect them to a laptop computer, portable CD/DVD/MP3 player, in-flight audio system or home stereo. They also offer a fold-flat design for easy storage in the slim carrying case.

Try the QC2 headphones for yourself, risk free. You really must experience them to believe it. Call toll free to try these headphones for 30 days. Use them on your next trip, in your home or at the office – satisfaction guaranteed. If you aren't delighted, simply return them for a full refund.

Call 1-800-901-0256, ext. Q6780 today. The QC2 headphones are available directly from Bose – the most respected name in sound. When you call, ask about making **12 easy payments,** with no interest charges from Bose.* And discover a very different kind of headphone – QuietComfort 2 Acoustic Noise Cancelling headphones.

FREE shipping with your order.

To order or learn more:

1-800-901-0256, ext. Q6780

www.Bose.com/QC

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

*Bose payment plan available on orders of $299-$1500 paid by major credit card. Separate financing options may be available for select products. See website for details. Down payment is 1/12 the product price plus applicable tax and shipping charges, charged when your order is shipped. Then, your credit card will be billed for 11 equal monthly installments beginning approximately one month from the date your order is shipped, with 0% APR and no interest charges from Bose. Credit card rules and interest may apply. U.S. residents only. Limit one active financing program per customer. ©2008 Bose Corporation. Patent rights issued and/or pending. The distinctive design of the headphone oval ring is a trademark of Bose Corporation. Financing and free shipping offer not to be combined with other offers or applied to previous purchases, and subject to change without notice. Risk free refers to 30-day trial only and does not include return shipping. Delivery is subject to product availability. Quotes reprinted with permission: Simson Garfinkel, *TechnologyReview.com*, 7/9/03; *Travel + Leisure Golf*, 7/03; Rich Warren, *News-Gazette*, 5/19/03.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the event, but how I responded to it at 3:47 that afternoon. And at 9:46 that night. There is a vividness to this immediacy that cannot be rivaled by print. The same goes for the 2000 recount, the Iraq War, the revelations of Abu Ghraib, the death of John Paul II, or any of the other history-making events of the past decade. There is simply no way to write about them in real time without revealing a huge amount about yourself. And the intimate bond this creates with readers is unlike the bond that the *The Times*, say, develops with its readers through the same events. Alone in front of a computer, at any moment, are two people: a blogger and a reader. The proximity is palpable, the moment human—whatever authority a blogger has is derived not from the institution he works for but from the humanness he conveys. This is writing with emotion not just under but always breaking through the surface. It renders a writer and a reader not just connected but linked in a visceral, personal way. The only term that really describes this is *friendship*. And it is a relatively new thing to write for thousands and thousands of friends.

These friends, moreover, are an integral part of the blog itself—sources of solace, company, provocation, hurt, and correction. If I were to do an inventory of the material that appears on my blog, I'd estimate that a good third of it is reader-generated, and a good third of my time is spent absorbing readers' views, comments, and tips. Readers tell me of breaking stories, new perspectives, and counterarguments to prevailing assumptions. And this is what blogging, in turn, does to reporting. The traditional method involves a journalist searching for key sources, nurturing them, and sequestering them from his rivals. A blogger splashes gamely into a subject and dares the sources to come to him.

Some of this material—e-mails from soldiers on the front lines, from scientists explaining new research, from dissident Washington writers too scared to say what they think in their own partisan redoubts—might never have seen the light of day before the blogosphere. And some of it, of course, is dubious stuff. Bloggers can be spun and misled as easily as traditional writers—and the rigorous source assessment that good reporters do can't be done by e-mail. But you'd be surprised by what comes unsolicited into the in-box, and how helpful it often is.

Not all of it is mere information. Much of it is also opinion and scholarship, a knowledge base that exceeds the research department of any newspaper. A good blog is your own private Wikipedia. Indeed, the most pleasant surprise of blogging has been the number of people working in law or government or academia or rearing kids at home who have real literary talent and real knowledge, and who had no outlet—until now. There is a distinction here, of course, between the edited use of e-mailed sources by a careful blogger and the often mercurial cacophony on an unmediated comments section. But the truth is out there—and the miracle of e-mail allows it to come to you.

Fellow bloggers are always expanding this knowledge base. Eight years ago, the blogosphere felt like a handful of individual cranks fighting with one another. Today, it feels like a universe of cranks, with vast, pulsating readerships, fighting with one another. To the neophyte reader, or blogger, it can seem overwhelming. But there is a connection between the intimacy of the early years and the industry it has become today. And the connection is human individuality.

The pioneers of online journalism—*Slate* and *Salon*—are still very popular, and successful. But the more memorable stars of the Internet—even within those two sites—are all personally branded. Daily Kos, for example, is written by hundreds of bloggers, and amended by thousands of commenters. But it is named after Markos Moulitsas, who started it, and his own prose still provides a backbone to the front-page blog. The biggest news-aggregator site in the world, the Drudge Report, is named after its founder, Matt Drudge, who somehow conveys a unified sensibility through his selection of links, images, and stories. The vast, expanding universe of The Huffington Post still finds some semblance of coherence in the Cambridge-Greek twang of Arianna; the entire world of online celebrity gossip circles the drain of Perez Hilton; and the investigative journalism, reviewing, and commentary of Talking Points Memo is still tied together by the tone of Josh Marshall. Even *Slate* is unimaginable without Mickey Kaus's voice.

What endures is a human brand. Readers have encountered this phenomenon before—*I. F. Stone's Weekly* comes to mind—but not to this extent. It stems, I think, from the conversational style that blogging rewards. What you want in a conversationalist is as much character as authority. And if you think of blogging as more like talk radio or cable news than opinion magazines or daily newspapers, then this personalized emphasis is less surprising. People have a voice for radio and a face for television. For blogging, they have a sensibility.

But writing in this new form is a collective enterprise as much as it is an individual one—and the connections between bloggers are as important as the content on the blogs. The links not only drive conversation, they drive readers. The more you link, the more others will link to you, and the more traffic and readers you will get. The zero-sum game of old media—in which *Time* benefits from *Newsweek*'s decline and vice versa—becomes win-win. It's great for *Time* to be linked to by *Newsweek* and the other way round. One of the most prized statistics in the blogosphere is therefore not the total number of readers or page views, but the "authority" you get by being linked to by other blogs. It's an indication of how central you are to the online conversation of humankind.

The reason this open-source market of thinking and writing has such potential is that the always adjusting and evolving collective mind can rapidly filter out bad arguments and bad ideas. The flip side, of course, is that bloggers are also human beings. Reason is not the only fuel in the tank. In a world where no distinction is made between good traffic and bad traffic, and where emotion often rules, some will always raise their voice to dominate the conversation; others will pander shamelessly to their readers' prejudices; others will start online brawls for the fun of it. Sensationalism, dirt, and the ease of formulaic talking points always beckon. You can disappear into the partisan blogosphere and never stumble onto a site you disagree with.

But linkage mitigates this. A Democratic blog will, for example, be forced to link to Republican ones, if only to attack

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and mock. And it's in the interests of both camps to generate shared traffic. This encourages polarized slugfests. But online, at least you see both sides. Reading *The Nation* or *National Review* before the Internet existed allowed for more cocooning than the wide-open online sluice gates do now. If there's more incivility, there's also more fluidity. Rudeness, in any case, isn't the worst thing that can happen to a blogger. Being ignored is. Perhaps the nastiest thing one can do to a fellow blogger is to rip him apart and fail to provide a link.

A successful blog therefore has to balance itself between a writer's own take on the world and others'. Some bloggers collect, or "aggregate," other bloggers' posts with dozens of quick links and minimalist opinion topspin: Glenn Reynolds at Instapundit does this for the right-of-center; Duncan Black at Eschaton does it for the left. Others are more eclectic, or aggregate links in a particular niche, or cater to a settled and knowledgeable reader base. A "blogroll" is an indicator of whom you respect enough to keep in your galaxy. For many years, I kept my reading and linking habits to a relatively small coterie of fellow political bloggers. In today's blogosphere, to do this is to embrace marginality. I've since added links to religious blogs and literary ones and scientific ones and just plain weird ones. As the blogosphere has expanded beyond anyone's capacity to absorb it, I've needed an assistant and interns to scour the Web for links and stories and photographs to respond to and think about. It's a difficult balance, between your own interests and obsessions, and the knowledge, insight, and wit of others—but an immensely rich one. There are times, in fact, when a blogger feels less like a writer than an online disc jockey, mixing samples of tunes and generating new melodies through mashups while also making his own music. He is both artist and producer—and the beat always goes on.

The triumphalist notion that blogging should somehow replace traditional writing is as foolish as it is pernicious.

If all this sounds postmodern, that's because it is. And blogging suffers from the same flaws as postmodernism: a failure to provide stable truth or a permanent perspective. A traditional writer is valued by readers precisely because they trust him to have thought long and hard about a subject, given it time to evolve in his head, and composed a piece of writing that is worth their time to read at length and to ponder. Bloggers don't do this and cannot do this—and that limits them far more than it does traditional long-form writing.

A blogger will air a variety of thoughts or facts on any subject in no particular order other than that dictated by the passing of time. A writer will instead use time, synthesizing these thoughts, ordering them, weighing which points count more than others, seeing how his views evolved in the writing process itself, and responding to an editor's perusal of a draft or two. The result is almost always more measured, more satisfying, and more enduring than a blizzard of posts. The triumphalist notion that blogging should somehow replace traditional writing is as foolish as it is pernicious. In some ways, blogging's gifts to our discourse make the skills of a good traditional writer much more valuable, not less. The torrent of blogospheric insights, ideas, and arguments places a greater premium on the person who can finally make sense of it all, turning it into something more solid, and lasting, and rewarding.

The points of this essay, for example, have appeared in shards and fragments on my blog for years. But being forced to order them in my head and think about them for a longer stretch has helped me understand them better, and perhaps express them more clearly. Each week, after a few hundred posts, I also write an actual newspaper column. It invariably turns out to be more considered, balanced, and evenhanded than the blog. But the blog will always inform and enrich the column, and often serve as a kind of free-form, free-associative research. And an essay like this will spawn discussion best handled on a blog. The conversation, in other words, is the point, and the different idioms used by the conversationalists all contribute something of value to it. And so, if the defenders of the old media once viscerally regarded blogging as some kind of threat, they are starting to see it more as a portal, and a spur.

There is, after all, something simply irreplaceable about reading a piece of writing at length on paper, in a chair or on a couch or in bed. To use an obvious analogy, jazz entered our civilization much later than composed, formal music. But it hasn't replaced it; and no jazz musician would ever claim that it could. Jazz merely demands a different way of playing and listening, just as blogging requires a different mode of writing and reading. Jazz and blogging are intimate, improvisational, and individual—but also inherently collective. And the audience talks over both.

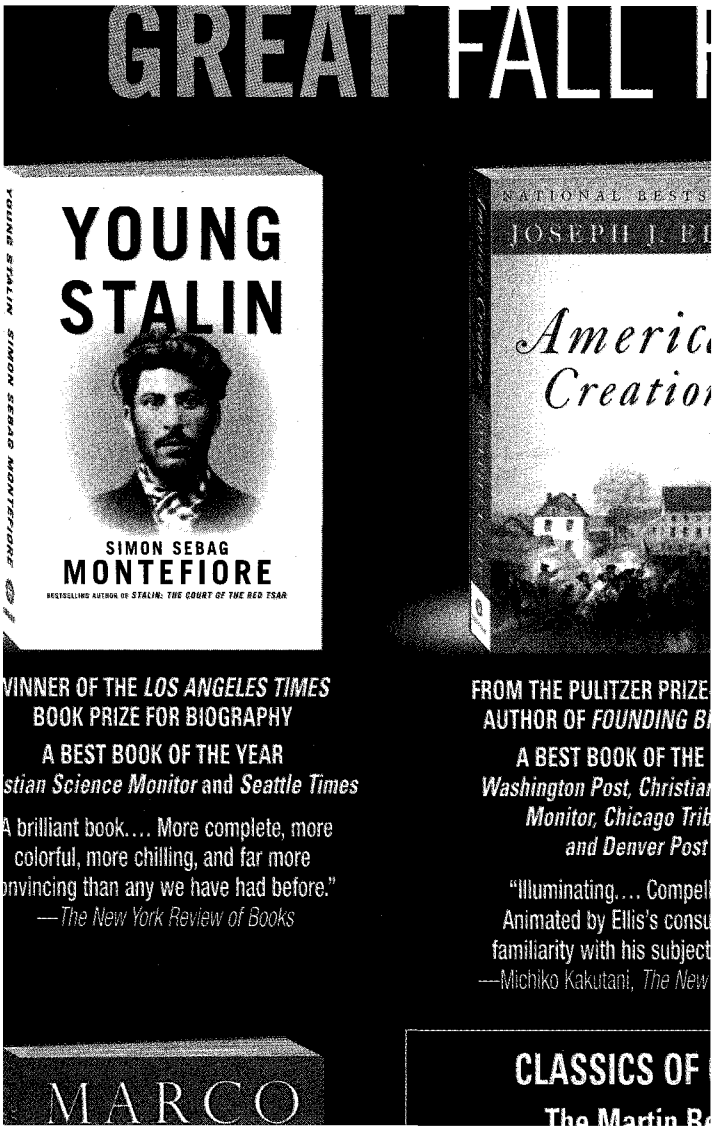
The reason they talk while listening, and comment or link while reading, is that they understand that this is a kind of music that needs to be engaged rather than merely absorbed. To listen to jazz as one would listen to an aria is to miss the point. Reading at a monitor, at a desk, or on an iPhone provokes a querulous, impatient, distracted attitude, a demand for instant, usable information, that is simply not conducive to opening a novel or a favorite magazine on the couch. Reading on paper evokes a more relaxed and meditative response. The message dictates the medium. And each medium has its place—as long as one is not mistaken for the other.

In fact, for all the intense gloom surrounding the newspaper and magazine business, this is actually a golden era for journalism. The blogosphere has added a whole new idiom to the act of writing and has introduced an entirely new generation to nonfiction. It has enabled writers to write out loud in ways never seen or understood before. And yet it has exposed a hunger and need for traditional writing that, in the age of television's dominance, had seemed on the wane.

Words, of all sorts, have never seemed so now. ■

Andrew Sullivan, an Atlantic *senior editor, blogs at andrewsullivan.theatlantic.com.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS

115 EDITOR'S CHOICE: **The Reel Thing** HELPLESS NOSTALGIA FOR A TIME BEFORE *STAR WARS* *By Benjamin Schwarz* • **120 Should Women Rule?** THE CURSE OF RESPONSIBILITY WITHOUT AUTHORITY *By Sandra Tsing Loh* • **132 Torch Song** THE GREAT LYRICISTS, BROUGHT (BACK) TO LIFE *By Corby Kummer* • **134 Cruel and Unusual** V. S. NAIPAUL'S INTERSTELLAR COLDNESS *By Christopher Hitchens* • **140 Cover to Cover** DU MAURIER GETS HER DUE; THE RUINS OF THE RAILROADS; SCOTTISHNESS DEBUNKED; AND MORE

The Dude abides. Jeff Bridges emerges as "the essential actor of modern American cinema" in David Thomson's "Have You Seen ...?"

POLYGRAM/WORKING TITLE/THE KOBAL COLLECTION

EDITOR'S CHOICE

The Reel Thing

AN INFURIATING, IDIOSYNCRATIC CRITIC CAN'T HELP BUT BE ELEGIAC IN CATALOGUING THE HISTORY OF FILM.

By Benjamin Schwarz

Now we have the long-called-for companion to David Thomson's *A Biographical Dictionary of Film*, first published in 1975 and throughout its various editions the most seductive, infuriating, and influential reference book ever written on the movies. Thomson, an Englishman living in San Francisco, is the author of more than 20 books, including several on movie personalities such as Warren Beatty, Orson Welles, Nicole Kidman, and David O. Selznick, and others on such disparate subjects as Scott's Antarctic expedition, Laurence Sterne, and Las Vegas. *"Have You Seen ...?"*—a by turns astringent and gushy appraisal of 1,000 movies made from 1895 to 2007—is, for better and worse, something of a muddle. Whereas the lyrical and bullying, ardent and Olympian, minutely detailed and defiantly impressionistic *Dictionary*, with its closely packed, tightly printed, double-columned pages, aims toward the comprehensive, this work discriminates in what it includes and what it doesn't—but does so using several different and somewhat contradictory criteria.

THE ATLANTIC SELECTION

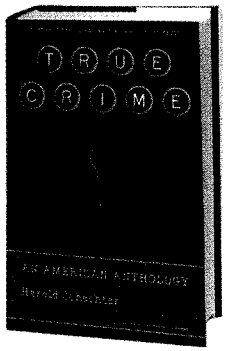
"HAVE YOU SEEN ...?"
By David Thomson
KNOPF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

True Crime: An American Anthology

Harold Schechter, editor The first fully comprehensive collection of the true crime genre, featuring literary figures as diverse as Hawthorne, Bierce, Twain, Dreiser, Capote, and Ellroy, and accounts of some of the most notorious criminal cases in American history.

800 pages • $40



"The best true-crime anthology I've ever seen. A must for every bookshelf!" —Luc Sante

"Almost obscenely entertaining . . . a searching look . . . at an aspect of the human condition that both horrifies and fascinates us." —*The Washington Post*

Together for the first time, the complete short stories of a master of the form, with an unparalleled selection of her far-ranging essays

Katherine Anne Porter

Collected Stories & Other Writings

1100 pages • $40

The first authoritative edition of our preeminent living poet, including a hundred pages of long-unavailable uncollected poems

John Ashbery

Collected Poems 1956–1987

1050 pages • $40

A two-volume centennial edition of an American original

William Maxwell

Early Novels and Stories **Later Novels and Stories**

997 and 990 pages • $35 each

Four Philip Roth books in one volume

Philip Roth

Novels and Other Narratives 1986–1991

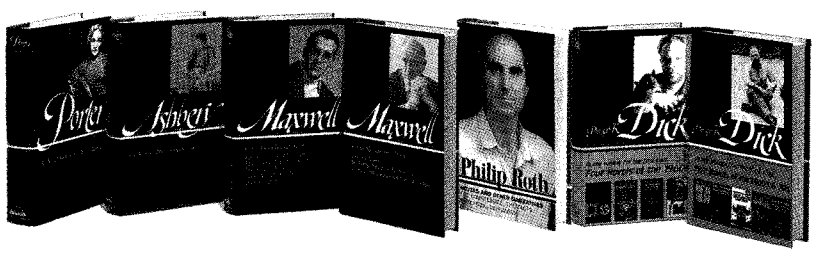
767 pages • $35

Two volumes of the mind-bending novels of a science fiction genius

Philip K. Dick

Four Novels of the 1960s **Five Novels of the 19602 & 70s**

835 and 1128 pages • $35 and $40 respectively • Philip K. Dick volumes shown with removable half-wrap.



THE LIBRARY *of* AMERICA **www.loa.org**

Classic Writers. Classic Books.

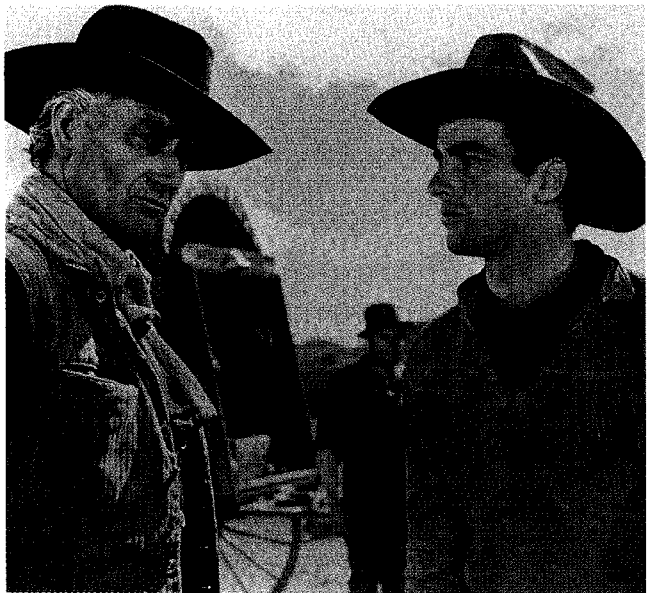
Distributed by Penguin Group (USA), Inc.

With its god-awful title, the book ostensibly responds to the question most frequently asked of Thomson: "What movies should I watch?" To be sure, he has included his favorites among the single-page entries. (The format, along with many other features, makes this a much less idiosyncratic work than the eccentric and audacious *Dictionary*, whose entries varied from three sentences on Wes Anderson to several thousand words on Graham Greene.) But he also writes about many pictures he can't stand, including the 1959 *Ben-Hur* ("Has anyone made a voluntary decision to see [it] in recent years?"), *Kramer vs. Kramer* (a work of "inane studied gentility"), and *Rain Man* ("the smug movie of a culture charging down a dead-end street"). All of these films won the Oscar for Best Picture, so the reader might assume that Thomson has gathered both movies he esteems and ones he judges influential commercially, culturally, or otherwise.

Not exactly: he omits *Mrs. Miniver*, *Gentleman's Agreement*, and *Crash*—all Best Picture winners, all social or political bellwethers, and all movies he (justifiably) doesn't like. He also ignores the Hope-Crosby "Road" movies, even though—as he notes in his typically penetrating and off-kilter history of Hollywood, *The Whole Equation* (the title is from *The Last Tycoon*)—those "silly ... stay-at-home 'Road' films" exercised a profound "healing effect" on America, and their stars were "the top box office attraction in America throughout the 1940s." Oh—and he does include four entries on TV series (*The Singing Detective*; *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*; *The Sopranos*; and *Twenty Thousand Streets Under the Sky*), products of a medium whose constraints and possibilities differ significantly from those of the cinema. Thomson can't resist forays into television: his entry on Johnny Carson is among the lengthiest and most perceptive in the *Dictionary*.

This jumble reveals a highly cultivated critical mind as it develops and refines judgments on minor issues, major themes, and first-order principles concerning the most vital art form of the 20th century and our social and emotional engagement

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The hard, lyrical Red River, *left. The underrated, ravishing* Heaven's Gate, *right.*

UNITED ARTISTS/THE KOBAL COLLECTION

with it. Throughout, Thomson points out the films Oscar has honored and shunned—verdicts he deems "misleading and unhelpful in the intelligent regard for movies in America"—to support his contention that assessments of movie quality have been consistently "ludicrous." Embarrassingly stupid pronouncements aren't limited to the movies, of course, but the cinema has been particularly susceptible to them. The apparently obvious reason is that the sordid commercial standards for judging a huge industry's product have squashed the standards for judging creative endeavor. But that's hardly adequate. After all, stately, self-important, and socially worthy pictures, not mindless blockbusters, crowd the list of Oscar winners over the years. And if many of the industry's judgments have been self-regarding and boneheaded, those of the academics and art-house critics have been faddish. How many critics in 1973 would have assayed *The Godfather* superior to one of their then favorites, Bergman's ponderous *The Seventh Seal*?

Still, Thomson insists that judgments be made, and that they be based on a deep comprehension of the medium. This wasn't so uncommon when movies were truly a mass entertainment—when they were what Thomson calls "the bloodstream of a great nation" and something like half or three-quarters of the population went to the pictures each week; even up through the early 1970s, a smaller audience had grown up in a movie-saturated culture. ("In the darkness at the movies," as Pauline Kael romanticized the situation, "where nothing is asked of us and we are left alone, the liberation from duty and constraint allows us to develop our own aesthetic responses.")

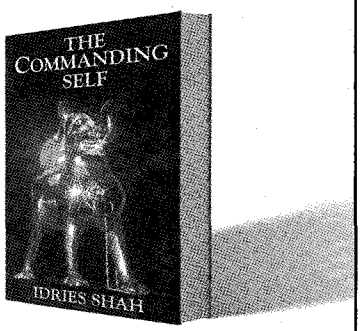
But today less than 10 percent of the population goes to the movies weekly, and the older pictures that account for most of the entries in this book are unknown to nearly every young movie-watcher. The availability of sparklingly restored prints of classics on DVD and on cable stations like TCM hasn't come close to compensating for the fact that old movies—good, bad, or indifferent, in all their creaky splendor—are no longer shown ad infinitum on local TV, where they weren't enshrined by cineastes but were just part of the movie-watcher's mental landscape. Today that landscape is awfully barren. The college seniors in a UCLA seminar I recently taught fancy themselves sophisticated filmgoers, but haven't seen *Grand Illusion*, *Chinatown*, or a single John Ford, Cary Grant, or Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers movie. Urbane newspaper readers, as Thomson bemoans, deem *Cinema Paradiso* the best foreign-language movie ever made—because they've seen it, and don't know its betters ("if you haven't read much else, then Ian Fleming's *Goldfinger* may be the best book you've ever read").

Thomson tries to set things right. He deflates undeserved reputations: *The Graduate*, "said to be one of everybody's favorites!," is "cold, heartless entertainment, never more ruthless than when dumping charm on us"; *Lawrence of Arabia* "is spectacular enough to pass for a thinking man's epic (without the thought)." And he champions the overlooked (John Huston's *Fat City*, Ida Lupino in *The Hard Way*). In his characteristically discursive manner, he builds his arguments over several entries. Jeff Bridges, thanks to his control and wounded grace (in *Fat City, Heaven's Gate, Cutter and Bone, The Fabulous Baker Boys, The Big Lebowski*), emerges convincingly as "the essential ... actor of modern American cinema"; Michael Curtiz's "blithe lack of self-regard" in his direction of *The Adventures of Robin Hood, Casablanca, Mildred Pierce, Yankee Doodle Dandy* makes him "not merely lightly likeable [take that, Andrew Sarris] but a genius." Thomson recognizes "the wit, the precision, the timing, the class" of *What's Up, Doc?* And he isn't taken in, not for a second, by that other attempt to modernize the romantic comedy, the jejune *When Harry Met Sally*.

Alas, when it comes to the movies he loves most, Thomson pretty much throws up his hands, having written and talked about them for decades: *Trouble in Paradise, The Rules of the Game* ("the greatest film by the greatest

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'People seek from spiritual sources
solutions to problems which are themselves generally only symptoms. The real spiritual school deals with the cause.'



THE COMMANDING SELF
by Idries Shah
Special price: $9.95

WhiteFlowerFarm.com
Distinctive Amaryllis Gifts
The largest selection of premium Amaryllis in attractive containers. Easy to grow, and success is guaranteed. Shop online or call 1-800-503-9624.

Grace Rare Tea
Free catalog: Award-winning, traditional, loose teas of unsurpassed cup quality. Since 1959.
Grace Tea Company, Ltd.
156 Fifth Avenue #1112, New York City 10010
Tel/fax 212 255-2935 • www.gracetea.com

THE WALLET PEN®
Now, you always have a pen.
One of Oprah's favorite things!
Sterling Silver

Made in Vermont
www.THEwalletpen.com

director"), *Les Enfants du Paradis* ("the warmth and kindness of the film is not easily separated from the fluency of its style"), *Swing Time* (he knows enough to give Arlene Croce the last word on this picture), *all* the films of Preston Sturges ("the man you must come to love if this book will mean anything to you"), *Bringing Up Baby*, *His Girl Friday* ("we are talking about a picture that received not a single Academy nomination, and we are talking about one of the glories of American film"), *To Be or Not to Be*, *Meet Me in St. Louis* (a movie set in 1903 that captures perfectly the achiness of the Second World War home front), *Double Indemnity* ("Fred MacMurray simply looks a better and better actor as the years pass"—yes!), *Red River* ("my favorite picture"), *Celine and Julie Go Boating* ("I don't think there has ever been a portrait so fond, so oblique, so touching, or so funny of what happens to us at the movies"), *The Godfather*, *Chinatown*.

Thomson is most penetrating when he develops and enlarges his ideas and arguments over multiple entries, and when he's neither praising nor slamming but simultaneously giving and taking away: see his ambivalent analyses of *Do the Right Thing*; *Tinker, Tailor*; the often magnificent *Heaven's Gate*, the photography of which is *exactly* "heartbreaking"; and *The Sopranos*—expertly done, but "*The Godfather* plays every year; *The Sopranos* in reruns will bore you."

It's impossible to read this book from cover to cover without being convinced that Hollywood's greatest achievements are not the monotonously important dramas that so often sucker in Academy voters but the stylish, highly polished entertainments, largely comedies, that endure even though they weren't made to be lasting. Above all, Thomson prizes wit, charm, and good-natured ease. He's reached an age, he notes in his appraisal of *North by Northwest*, when he'd "rather have a great screwball comedy than a profound tragedy. After all, tragedy is all around us and screwball is something only the movies can do."

Thomson has never been backward-looking—he's remarkably open and generous to contemporary talent, and has been particularly astute if exasperatingly partisan in his assessments of our current actors (witness his mad crush on Nicole Kidman). But this is an elegiac work. Even while his fine eye picks up the subtle, brilliant costuming in *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995) and even while he neatly dissects the rigor and wit of *The Queen* (2006) and praises mightily *Magnolia* (a 1999 film that has grown even more in his estimation since the most recent edition of the *Dictionary*) and *You the Living* (2007), the evidence is in the reader's hands:

> If you were to make a graph of when the films in this book were made, there is a great hump that stands for the thirties, the forties, the fifties. I can try to moderate it, but I do not apologize for it.

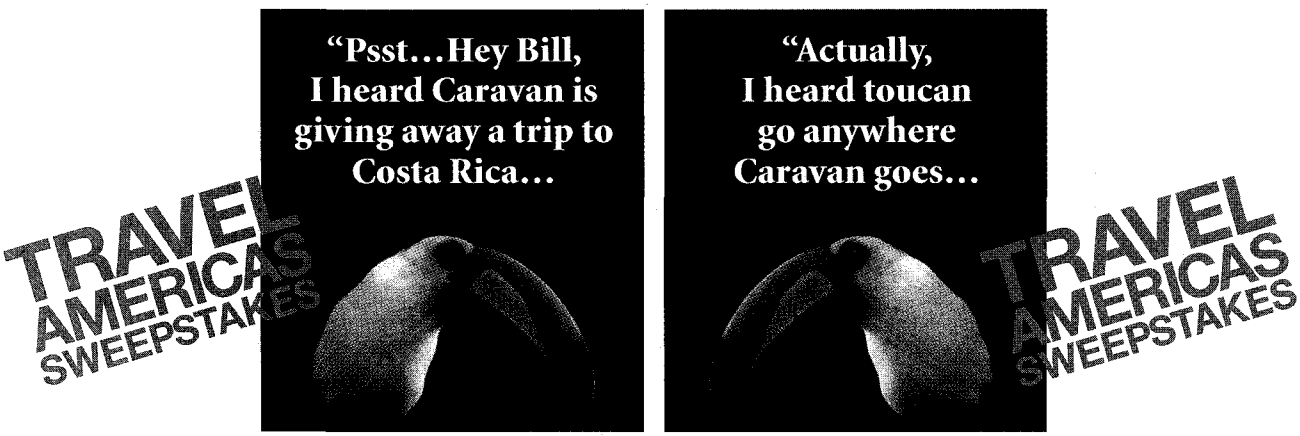
He understands that the critical task is essentially comparative, and he acknowledges that *"Have You Seen ...?"* in effect "weighs the old against the new." The result, he fears, is that "this book may come off as helplessly nostalgic."

Of course it does. It's nostalgic for a time when the movies were "everyone's sport," and their largest audience—and those who determined what picture to see—were women, not teenage boys. "I would suggest," Thomson wrote in *The Whole Equation*, "that any potential reawakening of American film as a mainstream current may turn on how far the country can ever admit its feminine side." It's nostalgic for a time when the West had something close to a mass art form, albeit one defined by a mixture of aspiration, failed effort, and compromise. It's nostalgic, that is, for a time far, far away, a time before *Star Wars*—"the line in the sand, the disastrous event," as Thomson rightly says, unconsciously echoing Kael—turned American cinema into an adjunct to the video-game industry. (The annual turnover for video games dwarfs domestic theatrical-box-office and DVD revenue.) This is the complex story of a far-reaching commercial and cultural change, one Thomson has already chronicled in *The Whole Equation*. So why bother to ask, as he does here, "Is it possible that the movies are going to end up as museum pieces?" They already have. A

Benjamin Schwarz is The Atlantic*'s literary editor and national editor.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CARAVAN.COM PRESENTS 'TRAVEL AMERICAS SWEEPSTAKES.' A SPECIAL OFFER FOR *THE ATLANTIC* READERS.



Travel America's Sweepstakes. Tour for Two.

But if you can't wait to experience the thrill of a Caravan escorted tour, you'll find the trip of your dreams priced at $995 to $1195. So you can choose the awe inspiring sight of the 7th natural wonder of the world—the Grand Canyon. Or stand in the immense shadow of Mt. Rushmore. See the stunning colors of Fall in New England. Or venture farther afield to the Canadian Rockies, historic Nova Scotia or south to the wonders of Mexico's Copper Canyon or Guatemala's Tikal and Copan.

And if you long for the truly natural, the incredibly lovely and the most exotic of all Caravan escorted tours, then choose a trip to Costa Rica, the earth's natural paradise. Book your favorite now—and enter our Travel America Sweepstakes at caravan.com/atlantic. After all, who says you can't have two trips of a lifetime?

How You Can Win.

Visit caravan.com/atlantic and enter your name, email and Code Line (see below). Winner gets two tours on any Caravan.com departure in 2009. (You choose the tour and date of departure!) Airfare not included. **No purchase is necessary to enter contest.** Winner chosen by random drawing on January 15th, 2009. We will notify the winner on January 16th, 2009 via email. Official Rules available at caravan.com/atlantic

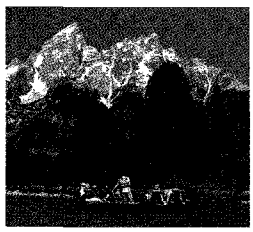
Enter Code Line:
toucanbilly

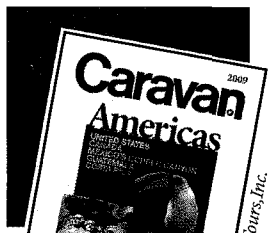
Caravan.com Escorted Tours. $995 to $1195,

Plus Taxes/Fees. All Tours 8 to 11 Days.

Canadian Rockies & Glacier Park
Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island
Grand Canyon, Zion and Bryce
Mt. Rushmore, Yellowstone, The Tetons
California Coast and Yosemite Park
New England Fall Colors
Mexico's Ancient Cultures
Mexico's Copper Canyon by Train
Costa Rica Natural Paridise
Guatemala with Tikal and Copan

Go places and do things all over the US, Canada, Mexico, Guatemala and Costa Rica—with Caravan.com





Your Caravan Latin America tours includes all meals (North America tours are most meals), all activities, all hotels, all airport transfers, and all transportation during tour. Join smart shoppers and experienced travelers.

Caravan.com
Visit our website, or call 1.800.CARAVAN.com

Call for free guide on fully escorted tours of the Americas priced at **$995 to $1195. #1 in value.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Should Women Rule?

A CLUTCH OF BOOKS SUGGESTS THEY CAN'T RULE LIKE MEN. BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO RUN THE WORLD.

By Sandra Tsing Loh

I HAVE ACCORDED FORMER White House press secretary Dee Dee Myers the apparently unusual honor of actually reading her book, *Why Women Should Rule the World*, and I will now discuss it, whether you want me to or not.

By "you," I mean the surly female ur-reader who long ago elected to ignore the encroaching continent of women's-studies tomes. Forget the *male* ur-reader. At this point, I doubt a man exists who would dive eagerly into a book about women's superior leadership qualities. As to which men *should*, well, if there remains even one male executive in Canton, Ohio, unaware that hiring a qualified, well-liked, profit-driven female is a *good* thing, I say let him slump gloomily in business class with his Chivas and Clive Cussler, because his skyrocketing cholesterol ("Cholesterol? What's cholesterol?") will soon fell him anyway.

To be gender-neutral where one can, it is fair to note that the genre of Important Unread Books—by authors with weighty résumés who seem to be on every TV talk show, and in every Barnes & Noble window display, gazing boldly, hands on hips—is apparently not limited to women. In response to my puzzled query as to why I'd seen Myers's book mentioned everywhere but read almost nowhere, a (male) friend of mine in publishing wrote:

> I'd say the Myers book sounds like the female equivalent of what we in the bookstore business (my former occupation) used to call Father's Day Books, e.g. anything by David Halberstam and/or about a Founding Father. Do people buy these books? Sure—they make great, heavy Father's Day gifts. Do people read them? Er—I don't have any exact figures, but I imagine more than a few of them are holding up wobbly Black & Decker work benches right now.

Still, when the first female White House press secretary (not to mention a *Vanity Fair* contributor) presents us women with a prescription for taking command of this sorry universe, shouldn't we hop to? I asked another friend of mine, the co-director of a Bay Area women's center and a fiery feminist if I've ever met one, if she'd picked up or even peeked into Myers's book. "Well," she sighed, "all those Washington political pundit women—they're always in business suits on CNN blabbing on and on about something. I just can't

CHRISTOPHER MORRIS/VII

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

get excited." But Myers's thesis is provocative. And what sisters belittled and ignored by men (and we are!) wouldn't savor a juicy salvo that vaults women to their rightful place (on top!)? The problem is, to gift Myers's book onto a busy multitasking girlfriend feels like gifting her with an extra weekend chore. For one thing, juicy salvos lob nail bombs at men, and Myers carefully—and probably admirably?—refrains from directly putting men down. No, the tone throughout is as friendly and measured—with just a little flash of heel—as a quarterly report. Myers begins by stroking the feminine ego, if in a somewhat bland, business-book way: women *should* rule the world, the flap copy of her book asserts, simply because "women tend to be better communicators, better listeners, better at forming consensus." Too, women are more practical than men. (Unlike certain presidents, a typical woman would know very well what a grocery scanner does.) Smart and tough, females have proved their excellence in the traditionally male fields—politics, business, science, and academia—that Myers suggests define public life, and she illustrates her points with a triumphal roll call of successful female CEOs, hard-driving female senators and governors, Jane Goodall, and a Third World Nobel Peace Prize winner with whose work I was not familiar but with whom clearly any sensible person would be hard-pressed to find fault. In short, as the jacket avers somewhat anodynely,

> In a highly competitive and increasingly fractious world, women possess the kind of critical problem-solving skills that are urgently needed to break down barriers, build understanding, and create the best conditions for peace.

With more women in power, the world would be better off. Specifically? "Politics would be more collegial. Businesses would be more productive. And communities would be healthier."

And yet, Myers maintains, for all our superior communicating, listening, and consensus building, the percentage of women at the highest levels of even the reasonably enlightened U.S. government is still woefully small, about 15 percent. Why *don't* women rule the world? Because even bright women aren't always allowed to shine in the Company of Men.

In support, she presents her own story. On the one hand, she still considers it an honor to have been chosen, in 1993, as the first female—and, at 31, one of the youngest ever—White House press secretary. She understands that, thanks to Bill Clinton's pledge to have a staff that "looked like America," she actually benefited by being a woman. On the other hand, Myers says she suffered the peculiarly female fate of having "responsibility without corresponding authority." She was expected to hold at bay the press wolves of the briefing room without having access to the most up-to-date information shared by Clinton's true inner circle, largely—it is fair to say—a boys' club.

WHY WOMEN SHOULD RULE THE WORLD
By Dee Dee Myers
HARPER

ALL TOO HUMAN: A POLITICAL EDUCATION
By George Stephanopoulos
BACK BAY BOOKS

THE ARCHITECT: KARL ROVE AND THE DREAM OF ABSOLUTE POWER
By James Moore and Wayne Slater
THREE RIVERS PRESS

Her authority was further diminished by having to share her position, in a highly unorthodox arrangement. Although Myers was awarded the title of press secretary, the new "director of communications," George Stephanopoulos, would assume the press secretary's customary daily briefings (Myers would be "backup" briefer), the higher rank of "assistant to the president" (Myers would be "deputy assistant"), the press secretary's traditional spacious West Wing office (Myers was assigned a smaller one), and, of course, the higher salary. Overall, it seems that Myers—who admits to struggling before the camera to get even her outfits and hair right—was outfoxed by George in every way:

> I remember walking into [Stephanopoulos's] transition office just days before we left Little Rock for Washington. There were some boxes leaning against the wall: long, wide, and oddly flat. "What's in the boxes?" I asked. "Four new suits from Barneys," he said. I'd never set foot in Barneys. George had managed to get himself

Music Theory and Ear Training in One Win/Mac CD
Learn how to read and understand music with the world's most complete music training software. Our friendly textbook, *Exploring Theory*, will guide you through a wide range of activities with difficulty levels ranging from simple pitch reading to rhythm tapping to polyphonic dictation, chord recognition, even composition. Most activities do not require an electronic keyboard – you can work with the sound capabilities found in your Windows or Macintosh computer (Win XP/Vista or Mac OS X, including Intel Macs). Used in thousands of schools and conservatories, *Practica Musica* is also available for home study.
For more information, visit our web site or call 1-800-445-4866.
www.ars-nova.com/atlantic

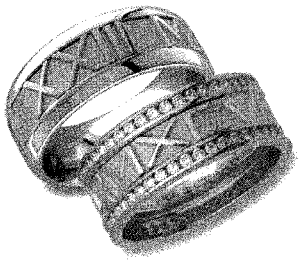
Publish Your Book
We print all kinds of books!
MP MORRIS PUBLISHING
We offer:
• low prices and many options
• production time of 20 days
• low minimum of 100 books
• assistance from start to finish
For a FREE Guide, call 800-650-7888, ext. ATM11
www.morrispublishing.com

AFRICA ◆ CHINA ◆ INDIA ◆ JAPAN ◆ NEPAL ◆ SRI LANKA ◆ TAIWAN
Since 1989
UPTON TEA IMPORTS
Purveyor of the World's Finest Teas
1-800-234-8327
www.uptontea.com
Free catalog listing over 350 varieties of garden-fresh, loose tea
34A Hayden Rowe St. ❄ Hopkinton, MA 01748

AN ENGLISH COUNTRY INN IN THE HEART OF NORTH CAROLINA
FEARRINGTON house
RELAIS & CHATEAUX.
www.fearrington.com ~ (919) 542-2121

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOHN ✝ CHRISTIAN
DESIGNERS & CRAFTSMEN

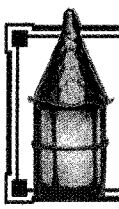


NUMEROS™
YOUR ANNIVERSARY DATE
IN ROMAN NUMERALS!
December 11, 1998 is XII XI MCMXCVIII
$650 & $4,400

CONTINUOUS LIFE™
YOUR CHILDREN'S
NAMES & BIRTHSTONES
(UP TO 5 NAMES)
$590 & $225

3 DAY RUSH AVAILABLE!
View Our Entire Collection Online.
JOIN THE J&C CLUB ONLINE AND RECEIVE A $25 GIFT CARD!
FREE CATALOG RINGBOX.COM 1.888.646.6466

Undiminished zest for life!
Diverse, appealing retirement community minutes from Oberlin College and its Conservatory of Music. Over 400 cultural events a year. Coordinated system of residential and health care options.
KENDAL® *at Oberlin*
Oberlin, Ohio
800.548.9469
www.kao.kendal.org
SERVING OLDER ADULTS IN THE QUAKER TRADITION



MISSION LIGHTS
Table and Floor Lamps
Indoor & Outdoor Fixtures
◀ *Mica Lamp Co's Cottage Lantern*
www.thebrightspot.com

CoffeeMakersEtc
Coffee & Espresso Equipment
for Your Home & Office
1-866-883-8181
www.coffeemakersetc.com

to New York so that he'd be ready to stand behind the White House podium on Day One. Even if he wasn't a woman, he understood that the world would be watching.

Oddly—or perhaps not so oddly, given the logrollings of punditland—the first rave on Myers's back cover is *by* Stephanopoulos. So no hard feelings now, officially. Enticed by the delectable mention of the boxed Barneys suits and curious to read a side-by-side comparison of those early Clinton days (would George mention the demeaning conversation he'd had with Myers in the basement of the Arkansas governor's mansion, blithely explaining her new responsibilities as "press secretary lite"?), I began reading Stephanopoulos's 1999 memoir, *All Too Human.*

While Myers's cover features her as a giantess towering commandingly over her authoritative title, Stephanopoulos's cover shows only his face, vulnerable, doe-eyed, Jacqueline Bisset–like—in other words, all too human. The lessons Myers ultimately derives from her experience are supported with bold pronouncements, research, and statistics. By contrast, Stephanopoulos's book is a Victorian bodice ripper. He describes his rapturous beginnings as an altar boy, the thrill of being behind the curtain, of staying calm in the face of power, of anticipating a powerful man's needs. So un-shy is he about choosing the girly metaphor ("Paul Tsongas, a Greek American, was my intended. Joining his campaign would have felt like accepting an arranged marriage") that soon a bad elf sent by Camille Paglia lit on my shoulder, jabbing a gleeful finger at every other line: "Clinton spoke to the me yearning to be singled out for a special job—the boy who had wrapped his fingers around the archbishop's *staff*" (italics mine). "Clinton began his speech by working his way down the dais with a special word or inside joke for every politician there. *Nice stroke*" (italics his). And George reveals the former profession of Clinton's finance-wizard buddy, Rahm Emanuel. How weird is this? Ballet dancer!

THE SEXUAL PARADOX: MEN, WOMEN, AND THE REAL GENDER GAP
By Susan Pinker
SCRIBNER

COUNTING FOR NOTHING: WHAT MEN VALUE AND WHAT WOMEN ARE WORTH
By Marilyn Waring
HARPER SAN FRANCISCO

LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MOMS: HOW ONE MOTHER RALLIED A MILLION OTHERS AGAINST THE GUN LOBBY
By Donna Dees-Thomases, with Alison Hendrie
RODALE

By the arrival of Dick Morris, the filthy, formerly estranged mistress (which led to Stephanopoulos's sitting around bleary-eyed and depressed, like a dumped groupie, waiting in vain for a suddenly emotionally distant Clinton to call), the elf was exhausted. But—and disappointingly for this feminist—whereas such pressing activities as peeling off chipping nail polish distracted me from Myers's careful and uplifting *Working Woman*–like book, in which the female leaders have all the complexity of profiles in an airline magazine, I could not stop reading Stephanopoulos's romance.

In George's White House, little is uplifting. Instead, there is abuse: Powerful gorgon Helen Thomas tears the communications director a new one on his first day and, after his flopped performance, cheerfully yells, "Welcome to the big leagues!" Rush Limbaugh superimposes George's head on a baby in his reports; when George protests, Rush pastes George's head on a toddler riding a rocking horse. And there are tears: Hillary yells at George, George bites lip, Hillary cries, George cries. Oh-so-many emotions run amok that Sensitive Male Al Gore helms a "bonding" workshop, inviting people to talk about their feelings.

The precious few mentions of Myers in Stephanopoulos's memoir are strikingly (in this purplish narrative) polite. In the few group action photos in which she appears, the captions tend to read, "Dee Dee Meyers (obscured)." Writes Stephanopoulos of his Haldeman phase: "The infamous *Time* magazine cover photo, before they cropped out Dee Dee Meyers ..." (the misspellings of Myers's name are George's). So yes, Myers seems marginalized, even in George's book! Then again, by the end of those particular White House days, it appears that almost everyone limped out of there absolutely shattered, holding their clothes in a pile. (Say you faced the press without knowing everything

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Atlantic HOLIDAY EMPORIUM

ANTIOXIDANT SUPERPILL

POMx is the most potent natural antioxidant, and the only pomegranate supplement reviewed for safety by the FDA. Plus the polyphenol antioxidants in POMx are supported by $25 million in medical research. Try one month FREE! (discount code: AT30) Offer valid only with sign up for POMx Monthly.

www.pompills.com/at
888.POM.PILL

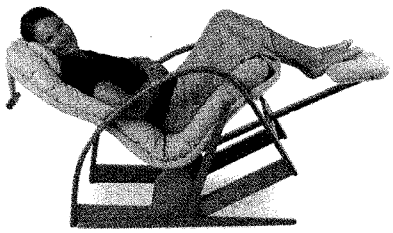
ATHENA PHEROMONES™

Enjoy more affection with Biologist's pheromones. Developed by Dr. Winnifred Cutler, co-discoverer of human pheromones in 1986.

"Both my wife and I use your Athena Pheromone products and feel we are starting a new relationship with each other." —Gene, TX

www.athenainstitute.com
610.827.2200

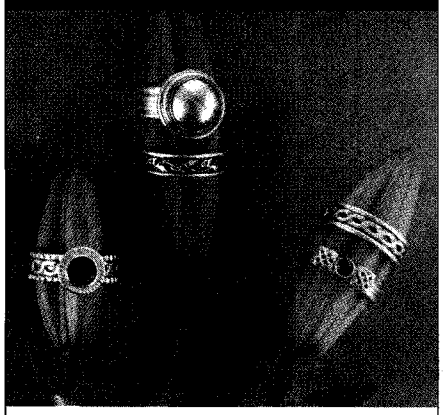
BRIGGER FURNITURE



For 30 years we have been making uniquely comfortable chairs, rockers, recliners and sofas in our New England workshop. Our exclusive designs combine solid hardwoods with fine fabrics and leathers to fit any decor. Visit our online showroom and find the furniture that's truly "made to fit your body."

www.kleindesign.com
800.451.7247

CELTICJEWELRY.COM



Ethically, fair trade made with recycled metals. Call for a free catalog.

888.733.5238

EAGLE RING COLLECTION

Senator, 14K Gold

A great gift for patriots of all political parties. Choose from thirty of our nation's distinguished U.S. eagles, masterfully handcrafted into the most striking ring collection in the world. Heavy in weight, extreme in detail and registered in the Library of Congress. Made in the USA, 100% guaranteed.

www.eaglerings.com
888.512.1333

SIGNATURE PLUS LTD.

Our ID protection wallets and personalized luggage straps give you ultimate protection against identity theft. Visit our web sites for more details.

www.the-strap.com

SLIM LINE HOODED CAPE

Classic comfort and style.

Offerred in black, blue, camel, charcoal, cranberry, & purple.

100% Merino wool
(P/M/L) $330
XLong $360

100% Cashmere
(P/M/L) $795
XLong $850

Made in Maine.

www.cascobaywoolworks.com
888.222.9665

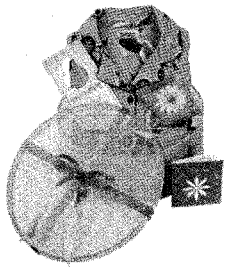
KINO INTERNATIONAL

The best in classic, foreign, documentary, and silent cinema! Kino produces an essential selection of film titles for the discerning DVD collector. Visit www.kino.com for special offers and great prices, or call for free catalog.

Holiday Sale begins November 15th!

www.kino.com
800.562.3330

SPOIL HER THIS CHRISTMAS

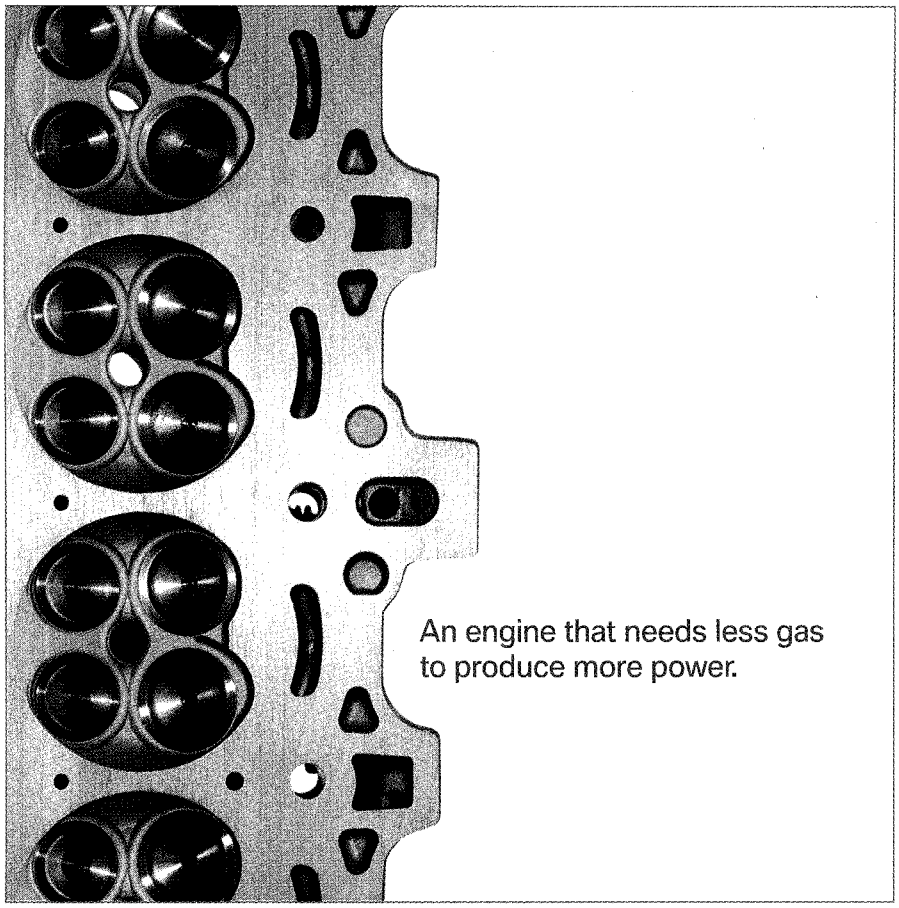


Send her a PajamaGram! Choose from hundreds of styles. Each PajamaGram comes with a lavender sachet, gift card, and Do Not Disturb sign, delivered in a beautiful hat box. All free! Christmas delivery guaranteed. It's a gift you'll both love!

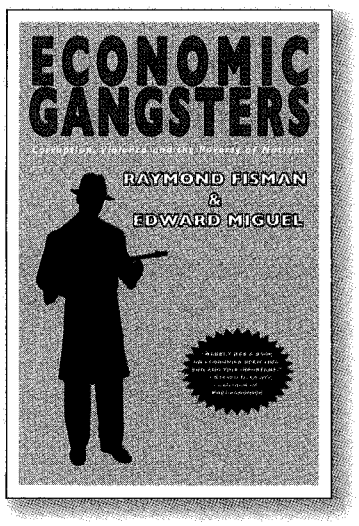
www.pajamagram.com
800.GIVE.PJS

Connect directly with these advertisers at www.theatlantic.com/store

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"Rarely has a book on economics been this fun and this important."
—Steven D. Levitt, coauthor of *Freakonomics*



Economic Gangsters
Corruption, Violence, and the
Poverty of Nations
Raymond Fisman & Edward Miguel

"*Economic Gangsters* is a fascinating exploration of the dark side of economic development. Two of the world's most creative young economists use their remarkable talents for economic sleuthing to study violence, corruption, and poverty in the most unexpected ways. Subjected to their genius, seemingly inconsequential events (like New York City parking tickets and Suharto's catching a cold) become potent tools in understanding how the world really works."
—Steven D. Levitt, coauthor of *Freakonomics*

"A lively tale that nobody concerned about world poverty or violence can afford to miss."—William Easterly, author of *The White Man's Burden*

Cloth $24.95 978-0-691-13454-3

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
800.777.4726
press.princeton.edu

Clinton knew? Welcome to the big leagues!) And if in the end Myers surely didn't enjoy a Stephanopoulos-sized $2.75 million book advance, neither did she suffer *All Too Human*'s vitriolic "reviews," a boy-on-boy *Lord of the Flies* slugfest ranging from, if I may, a fisting screed in *National Review* by esteemed literary critic (who knew?) Dick Morris to an appraisal in the usually genteel *Salon* that included such phrases as "star-fucking Machiavelli," "a little shit," "shorty," "asshole," and "the tragedy of Prickarus."

Such is the language of the men who rule. As Stephanopoulos himself cozily recalls, his War Room buddy James Carville screamed in singsong when they scored a press hit on a political opponent (in language that would be unimaginable in Myers's PG-rated book): "He's going to have a clus-ter-fuck; he's going to have a clus-ter-fuck."

So as far as women ruling in politics, the tally would appear to be: Women are smart, principled, professional, cordial—and just a bit dull (and let's not even go into Nancy Pelosi's book, *Know Your Power*, which her press release dubs, with a telling thud, a "keepsake"). Men are conniving, crude, backbiting—and lively. In Myers's formulation, women leaders are grown-up Girl Scouts who work toward their noble, humanistic (and at the same time, deftly bottom-line-enhancing) goals cheerfully and with just a little bit of moxie. The role models Myers celebrates include not Hillary Clinton (relations are strained) nor Condoleezza Rice (not actually indexed) but the country's 16 genial female senators, who even in today's climate have reached across the aisle, forged friendships, and cooperated on issues. (Myers even applauds Mary Matalin for ... being a spirited but civilized co-host on the CNBC show *Equal Time*. Which is certainly a delicate and singular way of summing up Matalin's legacy.)

At this point, I added *The Architect: Karl Rove and the Dream of Absolute Power* to my growing, unhappy heap of political biographies. (And let me tell you, to the Democratic husband, nothing is as sensually appealing as that thick Karl Rove biography tottering

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the wife's bedside table.) My gloom deepened as I read about Rove's vast, conspiratorial, conservative stealth fog, a fog microdirected by Rove not during official meetings in the White House but during rendezvous on rainy Washington side streets (called to order by Rove's quietly tapping on a car window). So while Myers's estimable high-mindedness about women is understandable for a person who cites, as youthful inspiration, Sally Ride (though God help Sally if she ever decided to enter politics! Under a Rove whisper campaign, even Sally's thrilling career would be brought down to a fishy silt: "You know those female astronauts—as they age, they get desperate! Lonely! Infatuated! They'll drive 40 hours! In diapers! Click link to see the funny cartoon Rush Limbaugh just photoshopped!"), if we want women to compete as *rulers*, I began to think, shouldn't we be able to do everything men do, succeeding if need be as competitive, manipulative, backstabbing, foulmouthed egomaniacs? Consider dragon ladies Leona Helmsley (ran her own hotel chain), Judith Regan (ran her own O.J.-friendly publishing imprint), and *Vogue*'s Anna "Nuclear" Wintour, so legendary in her frosty evil. Ah, the state of the world! Here is the one Borgia-like female who could prove to be a match for a sadistic Republican Master Planner, in a Godzilla-versus-Mothra matchup, with much vicious BlackBerrying into the night ("Boots! We're going to fight back with a mauve suede boot this season!"). But sadly, better lights like Dee Dee Myers have chosen safer, saner career paths—such as stay-at-home pundit.

Not that (more bad news!) women are generally predisposed to zero-sum games like elections, anyway—the caribou-hunting Republican vice-presidential candidate notwithstanding. To my come-hither bedside stack, I added *The Sexual Paradox: Men, Women, and the Real Gender Gap*, by the Canadian psychologist Susan Pinker. Using the latest neurological and biological findings of brain-imaging and sex-hormone assays, Pinker adds scientific ballast to the anecdotal truisms that women are more consensus-minded and team-oriented, and are better at reading human visual cues, interpreting feelings, and maintaining

BMW EfficientDynamics
Valvetronic Engine
bmwusa.com
1-800-334-4BMW
The Ultimate Driving Machine

Another innovation you'll find inside a BMW.

Our innovative Valvetronic engine is more powerful, more responsive and yet 10% more fuel-efficient than a conventional engine. It's another great idea from BMW. Learn more at bmwusa.com/ideas.

©2008 BMW of North America, LLC. The BMW name, model names and logo are registered trademarks.

Better Sleep
Better Health
Better Bed

LIMITED 20 YEAR WARRANTY

CERTIFIED SPACE TECHNOLOGY

THE *ONLY* MATTRESS RECOGNIZED BY NASA AND CERTIFIED BY THE SPACE FOUNDATION ✦

The Weightless Comfort™ of Tempur-Pedic®!

92% of our enthusiastic owners believe their investment in Tempur-Pedic is well worth it!

While the thick, ornate pads that cover most mattresses are necessary to keep the hard steel springs inside, they create a hammock effect outside—and can actually *cause* pressure points. Inside our bed, billions of microscopic cells of our TEMPUR® material work in perfect harmony to contour precisely to your every curve and angle—helping deliver our promise of Night-time Renewal.™

Our proprietary TEMPUR pressure-relieving material is a remarkable sleep-science breakthrough that *actually reacts* to body mass and temperature. It *automatically adjusts* to your exact shape and weight. TEMPUR is—*Soft where you want it and firm where you need it to be.*™

Tempur-Pedic gives you better sleep, and helps relieve everyday aches and pains. *Plus*...our no motion transfer between sleep partners delivers deeper sleep with less disturbance.

Make an investment in your sleep and better health with Tempur-Pedic's superior back support! Call us toll-free, without the slightest obligation, for your **FREE Night-time Renewal™ kit** with FREE 3 Month In-Home Tryout Certificate!

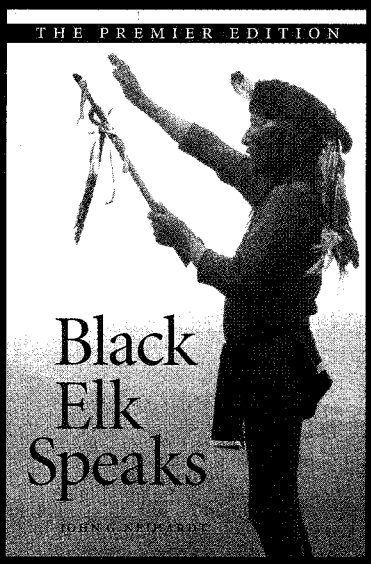
TEMPUR-PEDIC
welcome to bed™

FREE VIDEO / FREE SAMPLE / FREE INFO
888-238-3091
or visit us online at www.TempurPedic.com

© Copyright 2008 by Tempur-Pedic North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Furniture components not included. National owner survey conducted by Blackstone Group Research.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at SUNY PRESS



This Premier Edition features:

The *first ever* annotated edition of Black Elk's story by renowned Lakota scholar Raymond J. DeMallie

The *first ever* complete collection of Standing Bear's original illustrations, with new detailed commentary on them

An attractive, larger format

The *most comprehensive* index ever available

Black Elk Speaks *like never before*

excelsior editions

An imprint of
State University of New York Press
www.sunypress.edu

relationships and relationship networks than men. Since you asked, females score high in math, too, but interestingly, unlike males, mathematically gifted females also tend to be high scorers in other areas, giving them more academic freedom to opt out.

But when it comes to competition, in that great neuroendocrine smackdown, there goes the female advantage. Consider this startling study done with fourth-grade Israeli schoolchildren: when boys and girls each ran alone on a track, there was no measurable speed difference by gender. But when each child was teamed with another child and asked to run again, the boys ran faster and the girls ran slower—slowest of all when running against other girls! What females love is bonding, helping, sharing, and oxytocin—that "opiate-like hormone" dubbed by one anthropologist "the elixir of contentment." Forget all this tedious racing: what girls would really like to do is carry each other around the track—taking turns! Indeed, studies show that whereas competitive situations drive adrenaline increases in men, they drive adrenaline decreases in most women. Men associate more pleasurable feelings with competition than do women, and even "an eagerness to punish and seek revenge feels more fun." (Remember "tragedy of Prickarus" and "He's going to have a clus-ter-fuck; he's going to have a clus-ter-fuck"? Good times! Good times!) Even more harrowing: for men, not only does the urge to punish correlate with an increase in testosterone, but testosterone can measurably spike when they touch a gun.

The tally would appear to be: Women are smart, principled, professional, cordial—and dull. Men are conniving, crude, backbiting—and lively.

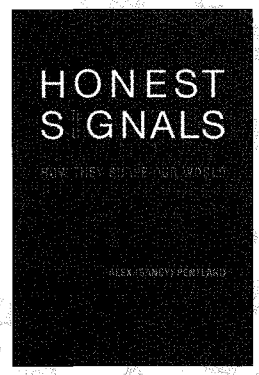
And that's just the dog-eat-dog male aggression you can see. Yet more pernicious is the result when that worldview is encoded, unquestioned, systemic. Indeed, the next layer of female radicalism belongs to those who argue that even the perception of money as a "measuring rod" is itself male-centric. In a hard-to-find yet truly groundbreaking book, *Counting for Nothing* (1988), Marilyn Waring, a lesbian goat farmer and member (then the youngest) of the New Zealand parliament, reveals few concerns about her hair and outfits and goes way beyond the trepidations and personal politics of being a female in a male-dominated government to hit back at—yes, and why not?—men, with a force so bracingly Old School as to be almost medieval. To one who came of age in the 1970s and '80s, when feminists had flowing hair and gypsy skirts, Waring's crew-cutted, steel-belted work is a shock. Formidably literate (tossing Einstein, Marx, Engels in here and there, like little folk proverbs) and unflinchingly numerical (warning her sisters that demystifying the economic system will be tough, calling economic textbooks "generally alienating, turgid, bludgeoning"), Waring eschews metaphysical questions of female selfhood and uses *her* pussy power to dive into a painstaking analysis of the United Nations System of National Accounts.

Essentially—and I confess, this was all news to me—the modern system of global GNPs and GDPs has its roots in a 1939 paper by John Maynard Keynes and Sir Richard Stone (who was later awarded the Nobel Prize), titled "The National Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom, and How to Pay for the War." Let us set aside the fact that zero value is assigned to the traditional household labor of women, including human reproduction—without which, as Waring points out, the whole system would collapse. (Actually, attending doctors, nurses, midwives, and anesthesiologists have quantifiable value, while the laboring mother does not.) An African female villager's water-carrying, fuel-gathering, food-preparing, 4 a.m.–to–9 p.m. workday counts as a zero, while a male criminal dealing in drugs and prostitution contributes to national growth (according to how the national income is measured in Italy).

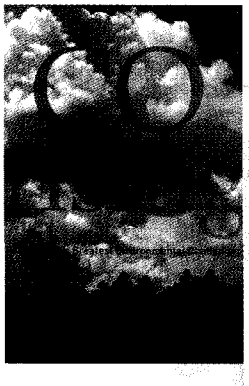
As Waring hammers home with example after absurd example, policies

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

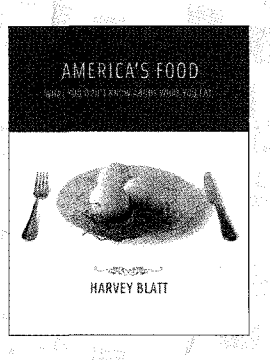
The MIT Press



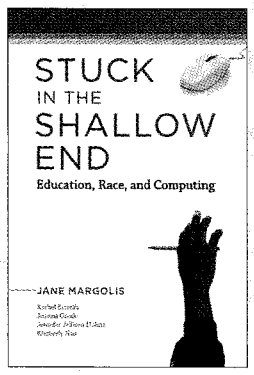
HONEST SIGNALS
How They Shape Our World
Alex (Sandy) Pentland
How understanding the signaling within social networks can change the way we make decisions, work with others, and manage organizations.



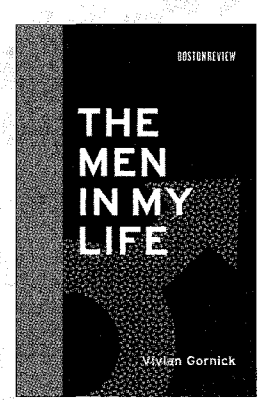
CO_2 RISING
The World's Greatest Environmental Challenge
Tyler Volk
"Tyler Volk is a wonderful expositor who tells it like it is. In *CO2 Rising* he has some feisty carbon atoms take us along on their vividly and clearly described romp through the bio and geosphere. A journey we most certainly affect."
— Roald Hoffmann, Cornell University, and winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry



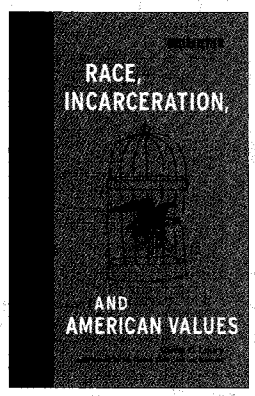
AMERICA'S FOOD
What You Don't Know About What You Eat
Harvey Blatt
"If you suspect something may be fundamentally wrong with the food you have been eating, you are right. *America's Food*, provides a multitude of scientific facts, understandable statistics, and logical conclusions that will confirm your suspicions. This highly readable book will almost certainly cause you to change how and what you eat." — John Ikerd, University of Missouri, Columbia, and author of *Sustainable Capitalism*



STUCK IN THE SHALLOW END
Education, Race, and Computing
Jane Margolis
"Forty years after Brown v. Board of Education, Jane Margolis exposes a barely recognized fact: minority children are still stuck in separate and unequal educational settings. Margolis points out why having high-tech equipment without a system in place to foster critical thinking, does little to close the achievement gap in poor communities." — Geoffrey Canada, President/CEO, Harlem Children's Zone, and author of *Fist Stick Knife Gun: A Personal History of Violence in America*



THE MEN IN MY LIFE
Vivian Gornick
Gornick on V. S. Naipaul, James Baldwin, George Gissing, Randall Jarrell, H. G. Wells, Loren Eiseley, Allen Ginsberg, Hayden Carruth, Saul Bellow, and Philip Roth and the intimate relationship between emotional damage and great literature.
A Boston Review Book



RACE, INCARCERATION, AND AMERICAN VALUES
Glenn C. Loury
with Pamela Karlan, Tommie Shelby, and Loïc Wacquant
Why stigmatizing and confining of a large segment of our population should be unacceptable to all Americans.
A Boston Review Book

The MIT Press To order call 800-405-1619 • **http://mitpress.mit.edu**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Introducing the world's simplest cell phone experience – with service as low as $10 a month**

It doesn't play games, takes pictures, NEW or give you the weather

No Contract

The Jitterbug® developed with Samsung®.
It's the cell phone that's changing all the rules.

The new Jitterbug® cell phone makes calling simple!

- Large, bright, easy to see display and buttons
- Comes pre-programmed and ready to use right out of the box
- No contract required
- An operator is always available to help you, and will call you by name
- Push "Yes" to call directly from your personal phone list
- Soft ear cushion and louder volume for better sound quality
- Separate Volume Up/Down button on cover of phone
- Hearing aid compatible
- Familiar dial tone confirms service (no other cell phone has this)
- Service as low as $10 a month*
- Access help wherever you go

Available in a simple 12-button Dial phone and an even simpler 3-button OneTouch phone for easy access to the operator, the number of your choice, and 911.

Why pay for minutes you'll never use!	Simple 30 Plan†	Simple 60 Plan†
Monthly Price	$15.00	$20.00
Included Minutes/Month	30	60
Operator Assistance	24/7	24/7
911 Access	FREE	FREE
Long Distance Calls	No add'l charge	No add'l charge
Nationwide Coverage††	Yes	Yes
Trial Period	30 days	30 days

Service as low as $10 a month and a friendly 30-day return policy.** If you've ever wanted the security and convenience of a cell phone, but never wanted the fancy features and minutes you don't need… Jitterbug® is for you. Like me, you'll soon be telling your friends about Jitterbug®. Call now.

jitterbug®
brought to you by
firstSTREET for Boomers and Beyond®
1998 Ruffin Mill Road
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

Jitterbug™ Cell Phone Item# BU-4722
Call now for our lowest price.
Please mention promotional code 36728.
1-866-540-0297
www.jitterbugdirect.com

IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION: Subject to Customer Agreement, select calling plans, and credit approval. Other charges and restrictions may apply. Screen images simulated. Coverage and service not available everywhere. Copyright © GreatCall, Inc. Jitterbug and GreatCall are trademarks of GreatCall, Inc. Samsung is a registered trademark of Samsung Electronics America, Inc and its related entities. *Not including government taxes, assessment surcharges, and set-up fee. **Applies to phone and monthly service charges only, provided call time usage is less than 30 minutes and phone is in like-new condition. Usage charges may apply. †All plans require the purchase of a Jitterbug phone. In addition, there is a one time set up fee of $35. ††Jitterbug will work almost everywhere in the U.S. where cellular service is available from most of the major carriers.

47303 All rights reserved. © 2007 TechnoBrands®, Inc.

that spring from building national GDPs can be destructive to the planet as well as to humans. In calculations of a GDP, a chemical spill is a good thing (think of the labor and expense—that's national growth!). A beautiful mountain is worth zip, but strip-mining—now there you have your growth again. Fresh fruit picked off your tree—nada. If you want to create growth, you must buy packaged corn chips. "Peace" itself has no value in a war-based economy—so the value of "safety" is determined by the price people pay for it (a town safe enough to leave doors unlocked gets a zero, while the armored cars and private security guards of São Paulo, Brazil, create growth).

Although Waring was not privy, in 1988, to the 21st-century neurobiological discoveries that Susan Pinker describes, she relentlessly ascribes certain behavioral traits to males. The free-market founder himself, 18th-century philosopher Adam Smith, "established the logical foundation for his work by identifying what he thought was essential human nature," she writes. "He developed an image of humans as materialistic, egoistic, selfish and primarily motivated by pursuit of their own self-interest." Quoting Smith:

> Man [sic] has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only … It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.

As we now know, Smith's assertion would indeed be true in a world made up only of men (a world, that is, in which the dinner on your dining-room table is mysteriously uncooked).

But fortunately, ours is not a world only of men.

All right, so what if women are power-wielding-impaired? Is *ruling* the world the only way to *change* the world? Recently, prompted by yet another round of proposed California public-education budget cuts (although California is the 10th-largest global economy, our per-pupil funding is among the lowest in the nation, according to an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

www.schweitzerlinen.com

Quality you can't live without.
Prices that won't keep you awake at night!

New & exciting collections of exquisite Italian bed, bath & table linens.
New intimates & nightwear, cashmere, accessories and much, much more.
Linen & Nightwear catalogs, $3.00 for both.
(Refundable with first order)

SCHWEITZER LINEN
Lexington Ave., NY. Columbus Ave., NY. Madison Ave., NY.

Toll Free: 800.554.6367

Sleeping on a Tempur-Pedic®

...is like therapy for your soul with our ultra-comfortable beds and pillows! Our proprietary TEMPUR® material is the heart of it all—SELF-ADJUSTING and contouring to your every curve.

Welcome to Tempur-Pedic
...welcome to a better bed.

FREE Information—FREE Catalog!
888-238-3091
www.tempurpedic.com

TEMPUR-PEDIC

This Morgan Silver Dollar Once Cost $350.
Now Pay Only $39.

FREE Shipping

"O" (New Orleans mintmark)

The Legendary Century-Old U.S. 1904-O Morgan Silver Dollar, Brilliant Uncirculated

In 1962, the 1904-O (New Orleans Mint) Morgan silver dollar was one of the three costliest rarities in the series, UNC's listing for $350. Then the Treasury released the last sealed bags of pristine 1904-O Morgans. Today no other Brilliant Uncirculated Morgan silver dollar costs so little compared to its peak price. **NEW CUSTOMERS ONLY: $39 (#18579) postpaid while supplies last. Limit 2 per household.** ABSOLUTELY NO UNORDERED COINS SENT. **30-Day No-Risk Home Examination: Money-Back Guarantee.**

International Coins & Currency
62 Ridge Street, Dept. 4936, Montpelier, VT 05602

Order at www.iccoin.net (many more great deals) **1-800-451-4463**

4936

Handmade Venetian Masks
by Si Lucia

Accept that invitation to a masked ball or add a festive touch to any room in your home.

Jolly Curlie red ladies 20" high #10518 $495.00

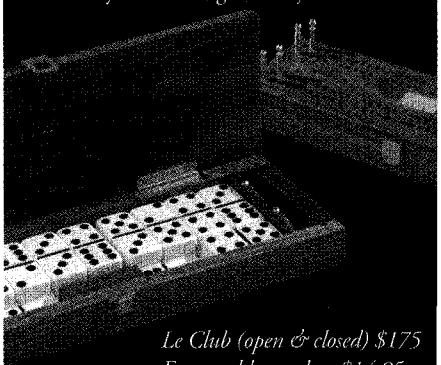
Jolly Curlie black mens 20" high #08790 $495.00

Georgetown Tobacco, presenting merchandise from the familiar to the fantastic since 1964

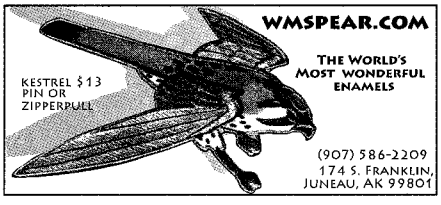
visit www.gttobacco.com to see over 160 available masks with prices starting at $45

(800)345-1459

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Finest Domino Sets on Earth!
Each flawless domino features gently rounded corners, a pleasing heft and deep gleaming black dots. Our cases are handcrafted from American Black Walnut by skilled California artisans.
Good to your senses, great for your brain!

Le Club (open & closed) $175
Engraved brass plate $14.95
Order by 12/14/08 for FREE SHIPPING* on orders of $75 or more.
Visit www.AlexCramer.com/atpromo to order or to see our entire collection.
Since 1975
Alex Cramer Company
*ground shipping in 48 contiguous states only

Canoe Canada's Arctic
Fly-in canoe trips on the remote tundra rivers of North America's last great wilderness. Herds of caribou & muskoxen, white wolves, moose and grizzlies. Warm, arid summers. Wildlife biologist guide. Operating since 1974.
Brochure: CANOE ARCTIC INC. Box 130A Fort Smith, NT, X0E 0P0, Canada (867) 872-2308
www.canoearctic.com



ROASTERS RC CLUB
Find out what makes us the BEST COFFEE CLUB
RoastersClub.com
866-883-8181

Education Week analysis adjusted for regional cost differences), I decided, in the heat of motherly perimenopausal ire, to throw a grassroots protest on the front steps of the Sacramento Capitol. At 46—a bit too long in the tooth to be Gen X, while still having managed to miss Woodstock—this was my very first street rally, so the skills I used (permit writing, release filing, Excel spreadsheeting) were those I'd acquired working for the PTA at my daughters' school. And while parents of both sexes seemed equally outraged about the budget cuts—many fathers passionately blogged about it and rapped out irate e-mails of "big ideas" (Get Jack Black from *Kung Fu Panda* to appear! How about a line of school buses 20 miles long?)—it was only the mothers who rallied themselves, in groups of two, 10, and 30. It was (surprise, surprise) the mothers who packed 15-person vans with pillows and blankets at 2 a.m., cut up apples and oranges, and hammered stakes in our tent city of 100-plus people (Sacramento is an eight-hour drive from L.A., so we rented RVs and camped).

True, our little rally was nothing compared with Donna Dees-Thomases's Million Mom March on Washington in 2000, an event she chronicles in her astonishing (and also hard to find!) book, *Looking for a Few Good Moms*—a volume that contains the most dauntingly titled appendix I've ever seen: "How to Organize a Bus." Dees-Thomases quotes a man, Million Mom Marcher Bill Jenkins—whose 16-year-old son had been shot dead while working at a fast-food restaurant—on the political power of numbers in the crusade she and her grassroots horde are waging:

> There are two ways to hunt. In one, the hunter ... enters the forest alone ... This is how the gun industry has been fought in the past. Dedicated lawyers and lobbyists who have learned its every move have been fighting one-on-one. Sometimes they have gotten clear shots and scored minor victories.
>
> But there is another way to hunt ... The entire village enters the forest. Not highly trained, just willing participants. They beat the brush, driving the quarry to open ground, and surround it, and the hunt is over.

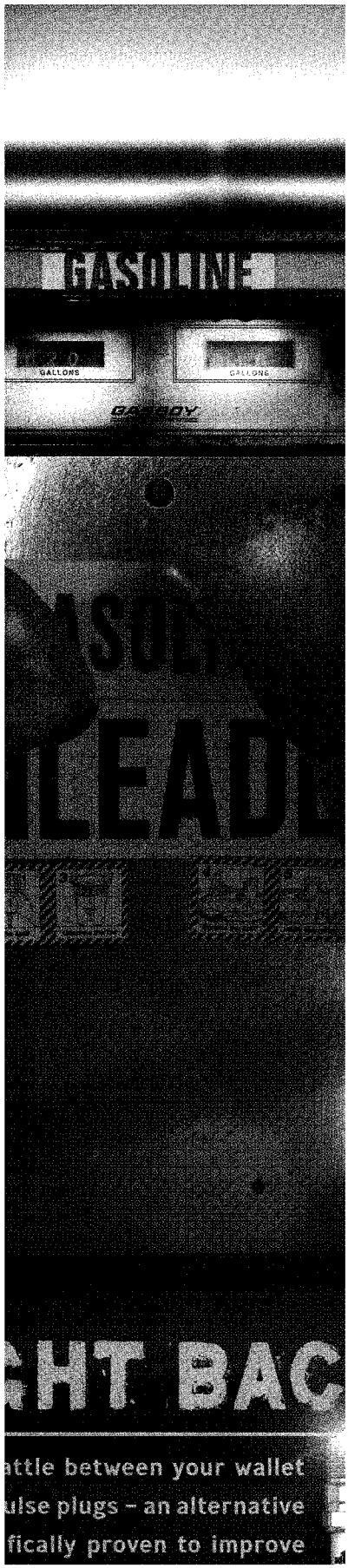
Crowding, in fact, may be more effective for women than ruling when it comes to changing the world. While at a biological disadvantage in competitions, women—who even make trips to restaurant bathrooms in pairs—are at a clear advantage when it comes to grouping together and the activities that accompany it: gossiping, sharing, bonding, assisting, scrapbooking, and building networks.

Given the apparent female neuroendocrinic aversion to competitive, winner-take-all activities like elections, unless testosterone shots become a new female norm, even democracy (thanks, Founding *Fathers*!), with its boastful, chest-beating campaigning, is clearly stacked against female candidates. (Now a monarchy, on the other hand, we could do. Instead of England's Elizabeths, let's throw in our own version of royalty like, who, some Kennedy women? Surely Oprah will know whom to choose. And while we're making wish lists, for the betterment of our planet and our communities I suggest, à la Waring, that we move immediately, on a global level, to a moneyless, relationship-based barter system.)

Barring such fantasies, we should learn to better organize our crowding. Today, the Barnes & Noble "Women's Studies" shelves are thick with books on women's self-esteem, on women's bodies, on women and money. But to exert more true power in the world, we need to pay less attention to our feelings, our clitorises, and even our 401(k)s. Why in five decades of modern feminist writing have we never seen any serious consideration of, for instance, the PTA, a hugely powerful, 100-plus-year-old, women-founded and women-dominated organization, whose well-funded and effective lobbying arm can actually help push through legislation? The women's movement has ignored millions of PTA women—women busy baking brownies and zooming about in their Kohl's wear, who can't *rule* the world but who can *change* it. My fellow PTA mothers—"change agents" all—we need more books that teach us to build and direct our networks to do the work *we* value. Women, that is, need more books on how to organize a bus. A

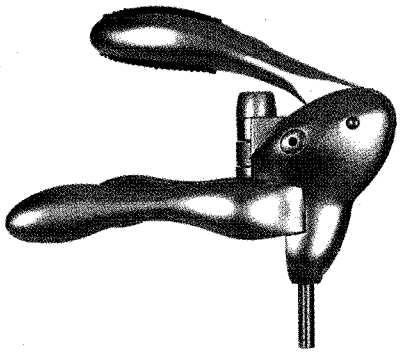
Sandra Tsing Loh's latest book, Mother on Fire, *was published in August.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

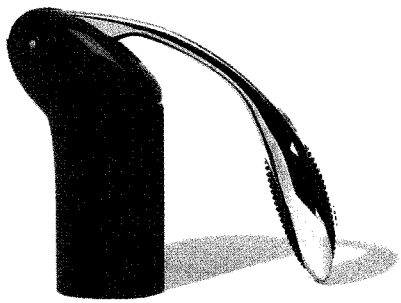


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How do you like your Rabbit®?



Over easy?



Or straight up?

The Original Rabbit pulls a cork in three seconds flat – with an over-easy pull of its lever. The new Vertical Rabbit does the same thing in the same time but does it straight up.

Which Rabbit is better? Don't ask us. We're proud parents, and all our Rabbits are brilliant.

Where to go Rabbit hunting:
Bed Bath & Beyond, Beverages & More, Bonton, Crate & Barrel, GourmetCatalog.com, Le Gourmet Chef, Macy's, Steinmart, Sur La Table, Total Wine & More

rabbit™ corkscrew
metrokane
metrokane.com

George and Ira Gershwin (center and far right) and a good friend, at work

Torch Song

REMEMBERING THE LANGUAGE OF LYRICS

By Corby Kummer

LYRICISTS, NOT BASEBALL players, were my heroes growing up, and as a young man I found a group of writers—notably including my college mentor, William K. Zinsser, and Wilfrid Sheed—who idolized both. They would fall easily into evenings around a piano, challenging each other to remember second verses and tricky bridges, and sometimes I got to sing along. Zinsser wrote a tribute to popular songwriters, *Easy to Remember*, and the great editor Robert Gottlieb (another early hero) compiled a largely proseless list of his favorite lyrics with the scholar Robert Kimball, *Reading Lyrics*; last year Sheed published *The House That George Built* (issued this year in paperback), a collection of biographical essays about many of the great songwriters. These books are all in their way autobiographies, because the subject is so closely intertwined with the writer's consciousness.

I may never write or even speak a sentence without some debt to the songwriters who shaped my cadences as strongly as my parents did, but Sheed's own boyhood and coming-of-age, in England and the United States, were actually set to the songs he heard on the radio and on records, when those lyrics were literally in the air. So this book is as close as he is likely to come to a full-bore memoir.

The House That George Built lays out one idea: that the gregarious and generous George Gershwin—himself the successor to a line of distinctly American songwriters including Stephen Foster, George M. Cohan, and Irving Berlin—spun forth the group of writers who defined the form and brought it to its greatest peak. But after relatively disciplined essays on Berlin and Gershwin, the book becomes a fairly shaggy series of chapters on songwriters Sheed likes, some of them to his mind too-little recognized (Harry Warren, Richard Whiting, and others both supported and swallowed by Hollywood), some of them a bit too revered if undeniably great (Jerome Kern and Harold Arlen).

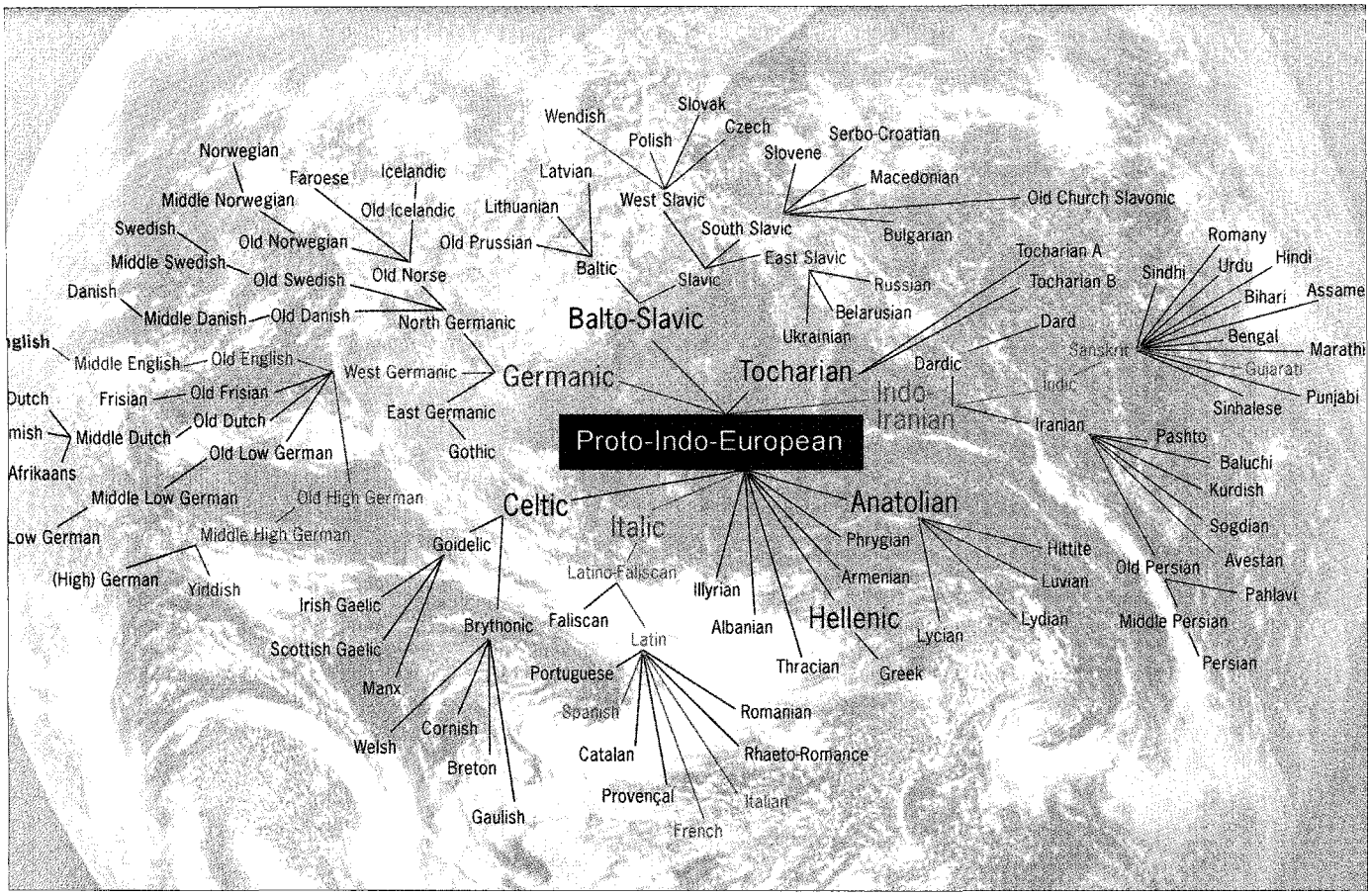
THE HOUSE THAT GEORGE BUILT
By Wilfrid Sheed
RANDOM HOUSE

The conversations with himself—about what makes a song pass the "automatic memorization test," or why it's easy to think Johnny Mercer wrote ur-American songs he didn't (he "could have won an open casting call for the part of himself")—and with many of the songwriters he met over the years make for delightful eavesdropping, and stimulate much of the jazzy, irresistibly stylish writing that has always made Sheed one of our most readable critics and journalists. This isn't an indispensable history or scholarly work, something it doesn't set out to be. But it is an indispensable book about loving songs—and one that brings alive what too many people think of as a dead language.

Corby Kummer is an Atlantic *senior editor.*

LEBRECHT MUSIC & ARTS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



NASA.

How Did One Language Evolve into 6,000?

Language not only defines us as a species, it also intrigues us with its endless mysteries. How did different languages come to be? Why isn't there just a single language? How does a language change? Professor John McWhorter, one of America's leading linguists and a frequent commentator on network television and National Public Radio, shows you the answers to these and other illuminating questions in **The Story of Human Language**.

Throughout these 36 fascinating lectures, you learn how a single tongue spoken 150,000 years ago evolved into the estimated 6,000 languages used around the world today. You also explore some of the burning issues in contemporary linguistics. An insightful tour of the development of human language, **The Story of Human Language** will richly reward you with its in-depth look into the origin and evolution of the marvelous gift of speech.

This course is one of The Great Courses®, a noncredit recorded college lecture series from The Teaching Company®. Award-winning professors of a wide array of subjects in the sciences and the liberal arts have made more than 250 college-level courses that are available now on our website.

The Story of Human Language

Taught by Professor John McWhorter, Manhattan Institute

Lecture Titles

1. What Is Language?
2. When Language Began
3. How Language Changes—Sound Change
4. How Language Changes—Building New Material
5. How Language Changes—Meaning and Order
6. How Language Changes—Many Directions
7. How Language Changes—Modern English
8. Language Families—Indo-European
9. Language Families—Tracing Indo-European
10. Language Families—Diversity of Structures
11. Language Families—Clues to the Past
12. The Case Against the World's First Language
13. The Case For the World's First Language
14. Dialects—Subspecies of Species
15. Dialects—Where Do You Draw the Line?
16. Dialects—Two Tongues in One Mouth
17. Dialects—The Standard as Token of the Past
18. Dialects—Spoken Style, Written Style
19. Dialects—The Fallacy of Blackboard Grammar
20. Language Mixture—Words
21. Language Mixture—Grammar
22. Language Mixture—Language Areas
23. Language Develops Beyond the Call of Duty
24. Language Interrupted
25. A New Perspective on the Story of English
26. Does Culture Drive Language Change?
27. Language Starts Over—Pidgins
28. Language Starts Over—Creoles I
29. Language Starts Over—Creoles II
30. Language Starts Over—Signs of the New
31. Language Starts Over—The Creole Continuum
32. What Is Black English?
33. Language Death—The Problem
34. Language Death—Prognosis
35. Artificial Languages
36. Finale—Master Class

Order Today!
Offer expires Friday, December 19, 2008

The Story of Human Language
Course No. 1600
36 lectures (30 minutes/lecture)

DVDs ~~$374.95~~ **NOW $99.95**
+ $15 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Audio CDs ~~$269.95~~ **NOW $69.95**
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

Audiotapes ~~$199.95~~ **NOW $49.95**
+ $10 Shipping, Processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee

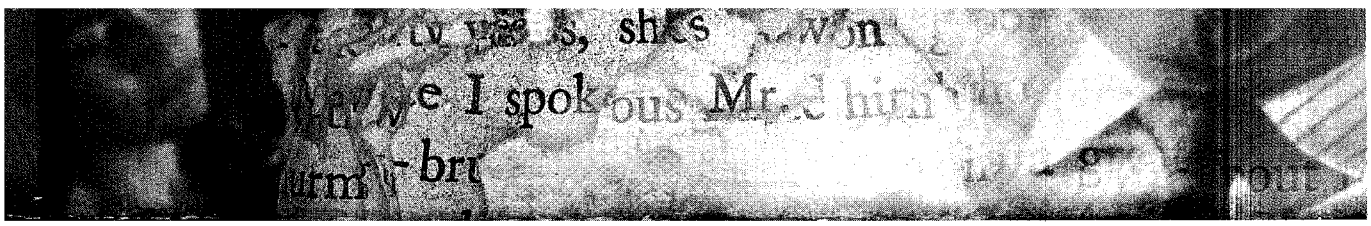
Priority Code: 30665

ACT NOW!

1-800-TEACH-12
www.TEACH12.com/1atl

THE TEACHING COMPANY®
The Joy of Lifelong Learning Every Day™
GREAT PROFESSORS, GREAT COURSES, GREAT VALUE GUARANTEED.™

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Cruel and Unusual

V. S. NAIPAUL HAS PRODUCED WORKS OF EXTRAORDINARY SKILL—AND LIVED A LIFE OF EQUALLY EXTRAORDINARY CALLOUSNESS.

By Christopher Hitchens

WHILE RECENTLY rereading *The Enigma of Arrival*, considered by many to be Sir Vidia Naipaul's masterpiece, I was struck all over again by the breathtakingly observant operations of his eye and brain. In a novel that is so plainly autobiographical as to be scarcely classified as fiction, he describes the atmosphere and context of his home on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, and the many obvious contrasts—as well as surprising comparisons—it affords to his native Trinidad. One comes to know the lives and characters of all the workers and servants on the landed estate of which the author's cottage is a peripheral part, and when he introduces other real-life characters, such as the novelist Anthony Powell and the reclusive '20s survivor Stephen Tennant, Naipaul's landlord, there is no attempt at disguise; many are given their real first names. So great was my absorption in Sir Vidia's descriptions of the grain and contour of southern England, and the habits and vernacular of its people, that an immensely salient detail escaped me until I was almost closing the book. The narrator's domestic arrangements are often touched upon, as are his everyday encounters with other human beings. But he is evidently a bachelor, or at any rate a person living on his own—whereas for the entire period of Naipaul's residence in Wiltshire, as for many decades of his life, he was married to the late Patricia Hale.

THE WORLD IS WHAT IT IS: THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF V. S. NAIPAUL
By Patrick French
KNOPF

It isn't very profitable to inquire whether she might have felt hurt by this kind of literary neglect, indeed airbrushing. The reception of Patrick French's astonishing (and astonishingly *authorized*) biography has already focused very considerably on the ways in which Naipaul maltreated his wife, not only through his extensive resort to the services of prostitutes and his long-running affair with another woman, but through what might be called a sustained assault on her self-respect:

> Vidia's unconscious hope may have been that if he were sufficiently horrible to Pat, she might disappear. Alone in her room at the cottage, she dutifully recorded his insults ... "He has not enjoyed making love to me since 1967 [the entry is for 1973]"; "You know you are the only woman I know who has no skill. Vanessa paints, Tristram's wife paints, Antonia, Marigold Johnson" ... Even

MARC YANKUS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LUNAR MAN-BATS, HOAXERS, HUCKSTERS, BARNUM, POE, PENNY PAPERS, *and* NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEW YORK...

THE STRANGEST TRUE STORY YOU'VE EVER READ

THE SUN AND THE MOON

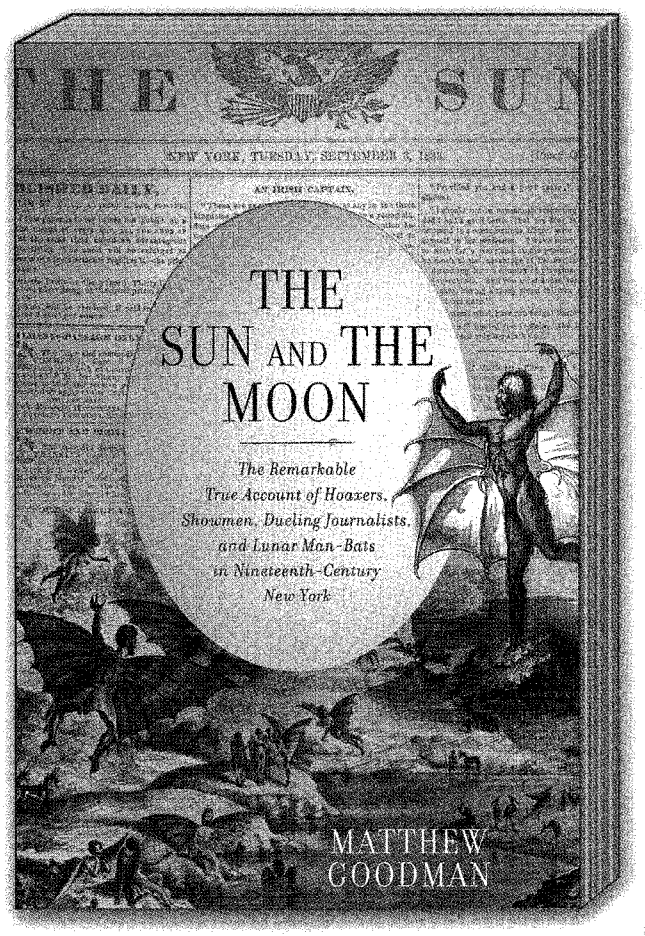
By MATTHEW GOODMAN

"Addictive. A mesmerizing story of a great hoax, and the old New York where it came to pass. Wonderful!"
—**KEVIN BAKER**, AUTHOR OF *DREAMLAND* AND *PARADISE ALLEY*

"I doubt I will ever read another book in which newspapers, New York, and biped lunar beavers all figure prominently. Matthew Goodman has assembled his improbable cast with wit and grace."
—**ANNE FADIMAN**, AUTHOR OF *THE SPIRIT CATCHES YOU AND YOU FALL DOWN*

"*The Sun and the Moon* is flat-out fascinating."
—**EDWIN G. BURROWS**, CO-AUTHOR OF *GOTHAM*

"A delightful recounting of the most successful hoax in the history of American journalism.... Absolutely charming."
—*KIRKUS REVIEWS* (STARRED REVIEW)



AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE BOOKS ARE SOLD

BASIC BOOKS
a member of the Perseus Books Group
PUBLISHERS WEEKLY PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR
www.BasicBooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rain or Shine

Pure fur felt hats, quality made in Australia, providing years of great looking service.

1611 ... $120

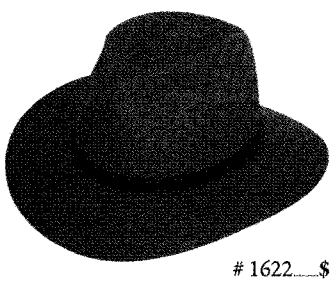
Snowy River

Pure fur felt, pre-creased 4" crown, 3 1/4" brim. 6 3/4 - 8 1/8. Fawn, Medium Gray or Black

1632 ... $125

Adventurer

Pure fur felt fedora, open 5 1/2"crown, (Indy bash shown, shaping charge extra) 3 1/8" brim front and back, 2 3/4" on sides. Sizes 7 - 8. Color Mid Brown



1622 ... $150

Banjo Paterson

Pre-creased 4 1/2" crown, 2 3/4" brim. Premium felt, Barramundi skin hat band. 6 3/4 - 8. Heritage Fawn or Charcoal

$8 handling. Satisfaction guaranteed.

Visit us online or request a catalog

Akubra® Hats from Australia

Northwest Coast Indian Jewelry

Filson® Outdoor Clothing & Luggage

David Morgan

800-324-4934 davidmorgan.com

11812 N Creek Pkwy N, Suite 103 • Bothell WA 98011

> when she was alone, Pat felt she had failed her husband. After going up to London to watch a play with Antonia, Francis and Julian Jebb, she concluded that while she was there she had "lived up to Vidia's dictum: 'You don't behave like a writer's wife. You behave like the wife of a clerk who has risen above her station.'"

And Naipaul himself loftily handed this diary to Patrick French. In 1982, he had been asked for a piece of autobiography, by Richard Locke at the revived *Vanity Fair*. His running the idea past his wife produced the following diary entry on her part:

> Last night I spoke of him letting me know the morning, nay the afternoon after our marriage, that he didn't really want to be married to me. Yes, he said, he wanted to ask my permission to write about that ... Would anyone, I asked, enjoy reading about that? I put in my usual plea: fiction & comedy ... I am very low. But then perhaps it is my own fault.

One feels quite pierced with pity at reading those last eight words, indicative of perhaps some sort of masochism or self-abnegation. If so, it is perfectly matched by the interstellar coldness of her husband's attitude. Speaking to French about the way his wife had reacted to his giving an interview about his years as "a great prostitute man," he says with magnificent offhandedness:

> Shortly after that she became ill again, and people say that this cancer business can come with great distress and grief ... I think she had all the relapses and everything after that. All the remission ended ... It could be said that I had killed her. It could be said. I feel a little bit that way.

He plainly believed that it would be useful if his biographer were able to tidy up that loose end.

I feel justified in reproducing so much of this painful material because it undoubtedly assists us in forming a picture of the many repressions and reticences that have allowed Naipaul to continue canalizing his experiences into works both of fiction and reportage. With the aid of this exhaustive and efficient biography, one can make some more-educated surmises about the connection between Naipaul's rigidly maintained exterior and the many layers of insecurity—perhaps better say the many varieties of insecurity—that underlie it. It was shrewd and intelligent of French to take the opening sentence from *A Bend in the River*—"The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it"—and describe it as "terrifying," then annex it for his title.

There were many times when the transformation of Vidyadhar Surajprasad into first the nicknamed Trinidadian youth "Vido" and then into V. S. Naipaul and eventually Sir Vidia could have been aborted, and one senses Naipaul's disdain for any sort of weakness, allied to the conviction that it is this very disdain that has enabled him to survive. The trope can be detected in that telling jeer to his wife about rising "above her station," and also as early as another quasi-autobiographical novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas*:

> Contempt, quick, deep, inclusive, became part of his nature. It led to inadequacies, to self-awareness and a lasting loneliness. But it made him unassailable.

Naipaul might not have escaped his family: a struggling clan of Indians with more Brahmanism in their aspirations than in their actual background, transported by the British from India to Trinidad. He might, having managed a scholarship to Oxford, have succumbed to the isolation and prejudice that he felt there—and that he was to register even more keenly when rooming in London at a time when black and brown faces were fairly rare. That he was able to transcend all this and become a figure in English society, as well as one of the acknowledged masters of its prose, is plainly felt by him to be best celebrated as a triumph of the will.

With the baggage of being dark-skinned in Britain, though, came the less obvious problem of having been lighter-skinned than most of his fellow Trinidadians. French demonstrates some expertise in handling this contradiction. Almost all Indians in Trinidad (in common with their kinfolk in the other Caribbean and African states where there is an Indian diaspora) were at some point made to feel (a) patronized

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by the English and (b) threatened by the demands of the black majority. In this crucible is formed the young Naipaul, who writes home from Oxford to Seepersad Naipaul, his beloved and writerly father and mentor, to say: "I want to come top of my group. I have got to show these people that I can beat them at their own language." But the same context produces the Naipaul who very freely employs the word *nigger*: a vulgar term that has no place in any elevated or discriminating vocabulary.

Here I feel I must say a word or two in defense of Paul Theroux. It is now a decade since he brought out his book *Sir Vidia's Shadow*, in which (as he has since phrased it) he depicted his former friend as "a grouch, a skinflint, tantrum-prone, with race on the brain." At the time, many critics characterized this as an envious vendetta, and the pressure of libel lawyers was enough to attenuate many of Theroux's observations, which in retrospect appear understated. "I wanted to write about his cruelty to his wife, his crazed domination of his mistress that lasted almost 25 years, his screaming fits, his depressions." Well, now that has been done, and published by Naipaul's own publisher, and assisted by his own hand and voice.

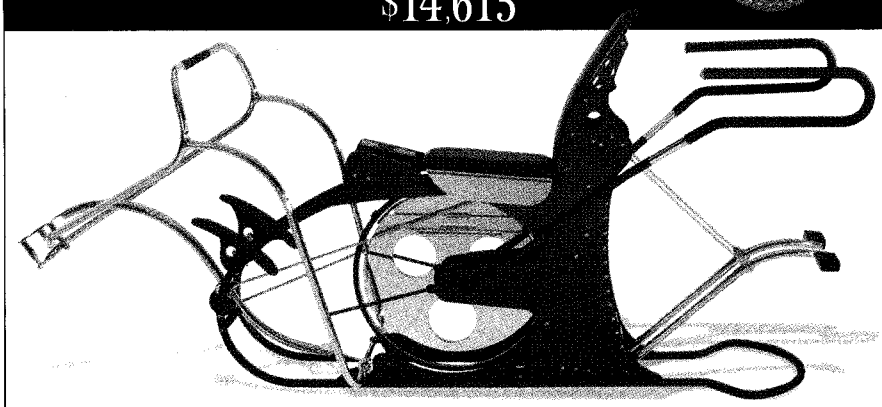
To me, the most extraordinary thing is the chiaroscuro. To immerse oneself in *The Enigma of Arrival*, say, is to experience the deep, slow calm that comes over its narrator as he paces the ancient chalky downland of Salisbury Plain, takes the measure of the seasons and the wildlife, familiarizes himself with the habits of the local rustics, and makes leisured comparisons between the agricultural rhythms of England and those of his Caribbean homeland. Yet to read Theroux or French is to uncover a sordid rural slum that is essentially an emotional master-slave concentration camp built for two. It's as if Blandings Castle were to become the setting for *Straw Dogs*.

"He wanted to be an Englishman," reports Naipaul's Oxford tutor, Peter Bayley. Well, no shame in that, I hope. (Indeed, Bayley was rather impressed by the young Vidia's precocious grasp of authors as venerable as Milton and as recent as Orwell.) However, and as the friends of T. S. Eliot also used to notice, there can be—perhaps especially with

EXERCISE IN EXACTLY 4 MINUTES PER DAY

Winner of the Popular Science Award for the "Best of What's New" in Leisure Products

$14,615



ROM • MANUFACTURED IN CALIFORNIA SINCE 1990

TIME IS IT. Over 92% of people who own exercise equipment and 88% of people who own health club memberships do not exercise. A 4 minute complete workout is no longer hard to believe for all the people who since 1990 have bought our excellent Range of Motion machine (ROM).

Over 97% of people who rent our ROM for 30 days wind up purchasing it based upon the health benefits experienced during that tryout, and the ROM performance score at the end of each 4 minute workout that tells the story of health and fitness improvement.

If you value your time at more than $5 an hour, the ROM machine is the least expensive method of exercise for you.

The ROM 4 minute workout is for people from 10 to over 100 years old and highly trained athletes as well. The ROM adapts its resistance every second during the workout to exactly match the user's ability to perform work. It helps to balance blood sugar, and improves bad backs and shoulders.

Too good to be true? Get our free video and see for yourself. The best proof for us is that 97% of rentals become sales. Please visit our website at: **www.FastExercise.com**.

The typical ROM purchaser goes through several stages:

1. Total disbelief that the ROM can do all this in only 4 minutes.
2. Rhetorical (and sometimes hostile) questioning and ridicule.
3. Reading the ROM literature and reluctantly understanding it.
4. Taking a leap of faith and renting a ROM for 30 days.
5. Being highly impressed by the results and purchasing a ROM.
6. Becoming a ROM enthusiast and trying to persuade friends.
7. Being ignored and ridiculed by the friends who think you've lost your mind.
8. After a year of using the ROM your friends admiring your good shape.
9. You telling them (again) that you only exercise those 4 minutes per day.
10. Those friends reluctantly renting the ROM for a 30 day trial. Then the above cycle repeats from point 5 on down.

The more we tell people about the ROM the less they believe it.

From 4 minutes on the ROM you get the same results as from 20 to 45 minutes aerobic exercise (jogging, running, etc.) for cardio and respiratory benefits, plus 45 minutes weight training for muscle tone and strength, plus 20 minutes stretching exercise for limberness/flexibility.

Order a **FREE** DVD from **www.FastExercise.com** or call (818) 504-6450

Factory Showroom: **ROM**FAB, 8137 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91605

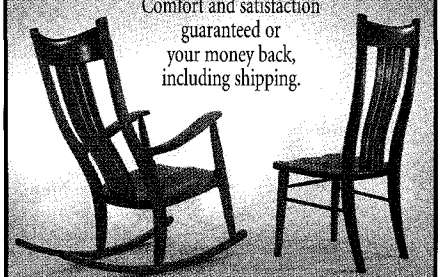
Fax: (818) 301-0319 • Email: sales@FastExercise.com

RENT A ROM FOR 30 DAYS. RENTAL APPLIES TO PURCHASE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Choice
Belgian WafflePro™ 850
Wow! Delicious Restaurant Style Waffles in 120 Seconds!

• New Taste Sensation! Delicate, lacy and crunchy waffles with great texture and flavor.
• Quad Plus™ Baking System lets you independently adjust bake time, power and temperature to select ideal flavor and color
• No need to flip!
EdgeCraft
(800) 342-3255
www.edgecraft.com
©2008 EdgeCraft Corp.

GARY WEEKS & COMPANY
FURNITUREMAKERS
Rocking Chairs and Dining Furniture
Comfort and satisfaction guaranteed or your money back, including shipping.

888-334-0307
www.garyweeks.com

PERSONALIZED
SEA CHESTS
www.seachests.com
www.toy-chests.com
- FREE BROCHURE -
TEL. / FAX
1-800-45-CHEST
COTTAGE FURNITURE LTD, BOX 1232, AVON, CT 06001

European Beret $14
100% Wool • One Size Fits All
Black, Navy, Brown, Red, Camel, Grey
Check or Credit Card w/Exp. Date.
Add $2 shipping plus $1 each additional
www.johnhelmer.com
John Helmer • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. T118 • Portland, OR 97205

Anglophiles—the problem of trying too hard. One wears a top hat on the wrong occasion, as Eliot was wont to do, or behaves with exaggerated grandeur in a fine tearoom, as Naipaul did in Oxford, or affects to know more (and discloses that one actually knows less) about matters such as Camelot and Trafalgar, as he does in *The Enigma of Arrival*. And sometimes this haughtiness and defensiveness take the form of extreme revulsion against the great unwashed, as when, in travel books like *An Area of Darkness* and novels like *Guerrillas* and journalistic reports like those from Argentina, a near-obsession with excrement and sodomy is disclosed. Oh, you know—Brahman fastidiousness, his defenders used to murmur. I am not so sure that this alibi will work any longer.

One feels pierced with pity at the diary entries of Naipaul's wife, indicative of perhaps some sort of masochism. If so, it is perfectly matched by the interstellar coldness of her husband.

The supreme need of the arriviste is to be able to disown and forget those who have helped him so far. But this isn't always so easy. If Pat Hale had really turned into a frump or a shrew or a bore, or taken to attacking the cooking sherry when company called, Naipaul's treatment of her might perhaps be more understandable. But French leaves me in no doubt that Naipaul hated her because he had depended upon her, and because she had sacrificed everything to help him both as a person and as a writer, and to be consecrated to his work and his success. He used her as an unpaid editor and amanuensis, and then spurned her because he resented her knowledge of his weaker moments. There will always be those—I am one of them—who are determined not to have authors and writers judged by their private or personal shortcomings. But there is a limit, and this is a biography as well as a critical study, and I think I know what French wants us to understand when he says, reporting a literary-financial spat toward the end of the book: "Never one to forgive a past favor, the man without loyalties threatened to break his links with the *New York Review*."

In these pages some years ago, I mentioned another alarming example of Naipaul's willingness to tread on the hands that had helped steady the ladder on which he rose. The brave Pakistani writer Ahmed Rashid, who did so much to alert us to the dangers of the Taliban, and who guided Naipaul around Lahore and even introduced him to his second wife, was rewarded by being lampooned and sneered at as a failed guerrilla in the pages of *Beyond Belief*. Patrick French can add only a little more to this dismal tale, because he apparently agreed to end the story with the death of Pat and the very rapid promotion of the next wife into the matrimonial home. Thus, and by means of a rather abrupt terminus that may signal authorial relief, we are spared the full story of Naipaul's later flirtation with the Hindu-chauvinist party the BJP, and his enthusiasm for the notorious pogrom at the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. Apparently, when Indians become arrogant overdogs and bullies, Naipaul likes them all the better. "Don't feel that I want to reform the human race," he once wrote from Oxford. "I am free of the emancipatory fire." Well, whoever thought otherwise? What we find in these pages, however, is the transition from the conservative and the lover of tradition into something that is often wrongly confused with it: the reactionary and the triumphalist. Let me remind you how Naipaul could be at his best, even if it did involve evoking the rivalry between Africans and Indians. His novella *In a Free State* includes a moment when well-tailored African politicians and bureaucrats sit in a bar. "They hadn't paid for the suits they wore; in some cases they had had the drapers deported." That's very nearly spot-on. Reviewing the book in 1970, Nadine Gordimer said that Naipaul was "past master of the difficult art of making

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

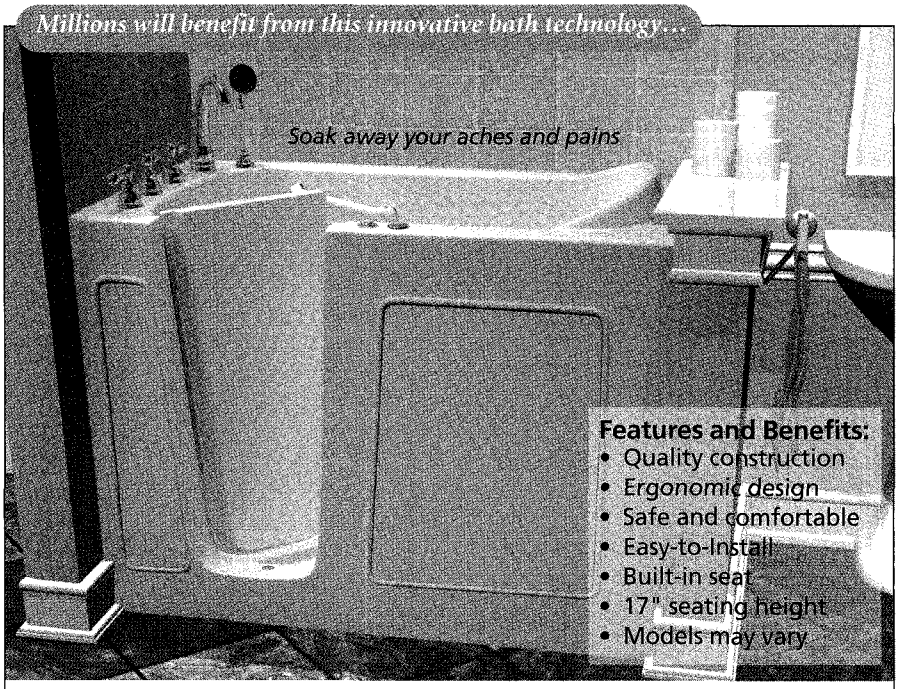
you laugh and then feel shame at your laughter." Such ironic lightness seems, and is, a long time ago.

Two small portraits in contrast could have been more fully and usefully rendered by French. In Naipaul's earlier and slightly more generous days, when he benefited from the solidarity on offer from the BBC's Caribbean service and its network of struggling writers, he used to concede a debt to his fellow Trinidadian C. L. R. James, who as well as being the world's authority on the game of cricket was the author of *The Black Jacobins*, a seismic history of the Haitian revolution of 1791. Indeed, Naipaul's first collection of local-color Port of Spain stories, *Miguel Street*, clearly owes something to James's *Minty Alley*, a book published in 1936 that also influenced Naipaul's journalist father. The character of Lebrun in *A Way in the World*, who is depicted in a half-admiring and half-fearful way as a prophet of black power, is also rooted in a portrait of James. One wishes that French had stepped aside for a second and said something about James's place in regional and literary history.

It would also have been nice to have a little more justice done to Naipaul's younger brother, Shiva. He was felled by a heart attack in 1985, at the age of 40, leaving all who had known him with an aching feeling that we had had the best still to come. In a rather sketchy account—which does include the useful term *Naipauline*—French vaguely praises Shiva's book *North of South* but fails to give due recognition to one of the great tragicomic novels of our day, his *Fireflies*. I mention these comparisons because both of these authors, too, had to confront the colonial and post-colonial condition and were obliged to make their way in a foreign land and negotiate the difficulties of racism and social insecurity; and they managed to do so without saying or doing anything hateful. Their humanism and internationalism, far from being insipid, suggest that if Sir Vidia ever did want to excuse his own callousness—a prospect that seems extremely distant—he would not now be able to plead that his fault lay in his stars rather than in himself.

Christopher Hitchens is an Atlantic *contributing editor and a* Vanity Fair *columnist.*

Millions will benefit from this innovative bath technology…



*"I finally decided to get my walk-in tub from first*STREET…

Now, I can enjoy my bath again safely!"

firstSTREET exclusive not available in stores

"For years, I used to look forward to my daily bath. It was my time to get away from the pressures of daily life. I'd sit back, relax and before I knew it, I was refreshed and relaxed. Lately, due to health and mobility issues, I'd found it harder and harder to get in and out of the tub. I was so afraid that I'd slip and fall that I began taking showers and sponge baths. I sure missed my daily bathing ritual, until a friend told me about a wonderful solution. It's called the Walk-In Tub… and it's changed my life!"

If you or someone you love has had to give up the therapeutic benefits of a relaxing, refreshing bath, you should know more about our walk-in tubs. They feature a 100% leak-proof, walk-in door with lifetime warranty, high contoured seat, easy-to-reach controls, and a quick-drain system for maximum comfort. These tubs are designed for easy installation by almost any handyman, and they are backed by a "best-in-the-business" warranty that will ensure trouble-free use for years to come. All models offer optional jetted air or heated water. They come in all different sizes with a variety of features to meet your every need!

Why wait to rediscover one of life's simple pleasures. Our product experts are standing by to tell you all about the features and benefits and to answer any questions you may have. Call today and enjoy a bath again, plus enhance the value of your home.

firstSTREET Walk-In Tub™

Call now for our lowest price ever!

Please mention promotional code 36729.

For fastest service, call toll-free 24 hours a day

1-800-288-5268

We accept all major credit cards, or if you choose, you can pay by check over the phone. To order by mail, please call for details.

firstSTREET® for Boomers and Beyond®

1998 Ruffin Mill Road
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

www.firststreettubs.com

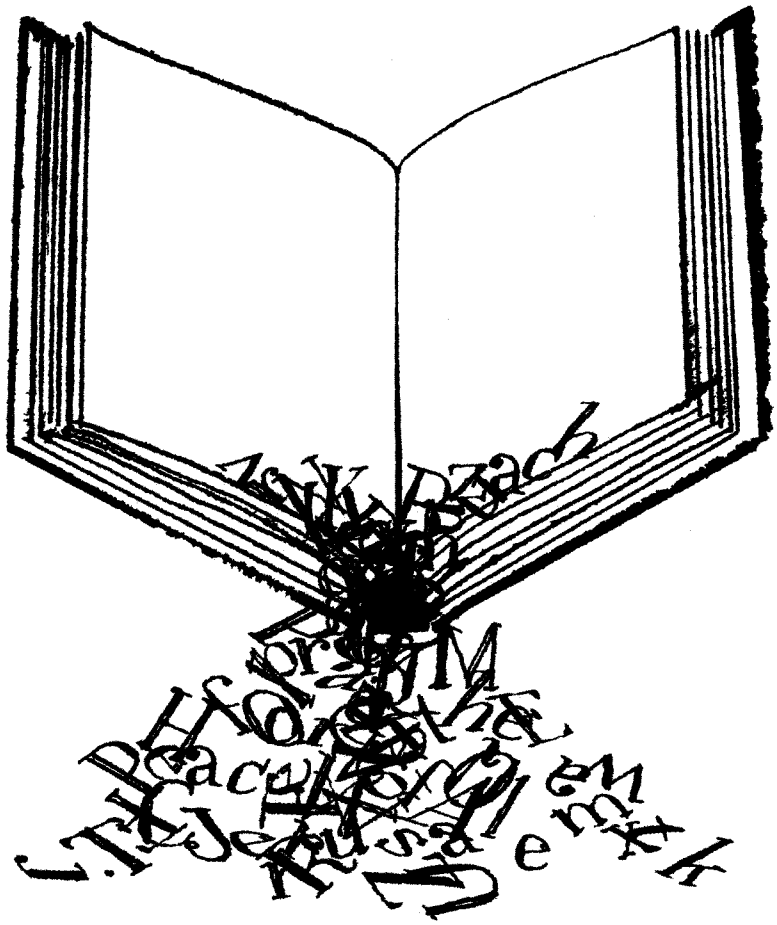
All Rights Reserved © 2008 TechnoBrands, Inc.

56271

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COVER TO COVER

A Guide to Additional Releases



Daphne
Justine Picardie
BLOOMSBURY

The Daphne du Maurier Companion
Helen Taylor, editor
VIRAGO/TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Don't Look Now: Stories
Daphne du Maurier
NEW YORK REVIEW BOOKS

A century after her birth, Daphne du Maurier, who achieved enormous commercial success but no place in the literary canon, is finally getting some critical respect. Feminism can take some of the credit, and there can be little question now that du Maurier was an innovative and strikingly original literary artist. Her distinctive character comes to life in Picardie's fictional portrait, which is a complex novelistic homage to du Maurier and her most famous book, *Rebecca*. Virago's *Companion* contains essays (two of them by Picardie) on her work, as well as biographical material, and is a searching examination of her life and art. *Don't Look Now* is a stunning collection of du Maurier's particular brand of intricately plotted story. The mesmerizing title story was faithfully adapted by Nicholas Roeg, and the volume also includes the creepily riveting tale "The Birds," which, like *Rebecca*, was filmed by Alfred Hitchcock. These three books penetrate to the heart of this troubled genius and her multifaceted oeuvre.

Acedia & Me
Kathleen Norris
RIVERHEAD

Norris, a religiously inclined poet and essayist, compounds her interests here, offering a moving memoir and an etymological explication of acedia, a state of spiritual torpor identified by early Christian monastics and known variously as "soul-weariness," "the noonday demon," even plain "ennui." Drawing on her hard-won experiences, she demarcates such neurasthenia from depression, its modern, medically treatable relative; weighs its deleterious effects on a grand cultural scale; and argues, sometimes persuasively, that a rarely diagnosed, centuries-old condition plagues us still.

The Oxford Project
Photographs by Peter Feldstein, text by Stephen G. Bloom
WELCOME BOOKS

In May 1984, Feldstein set up a sign outside a main-street shop in Oxford, Iowa, his hometown. On it he wrote GET YOUR PHOTO TAKEN. By the end of the summer, he'd taken a single black-and-white shot of nearly all of Oxford's 676 residents. Twenty years later, he resurrected the project, but this time the writer Stephen G. Bloom interviewed each resident, with revelatory results. The product is a hard-to-put-down coffee-table book, with big, striking then-and-now portraits, that pulls you deep into small-town America, with its almost excessive heartbreaks and intermittent joys. The danger of such a project is that it can make caricatures out of real people—but this book stays true to its life-worn subjects and to the complexities of what would seem to be the most simple of places.

I See You Everywhere
Julia Glass
PANTHEON

Glass's third book—a novel in spirit if not in structure—plumbs the relationship between two sisters with equally strong wills, if somewhat antithetical personalities. As in all of Glass's work, much of the delight in these interlaced stories, in which the sisters alternate point of view, comes from the precision and vibrancy with which she presents her fully realized and jam-packed fictional world. Like bumper cars, the sisters touch and careen apart, supplying each other with sympathy and yet fiercely insisting on their differences and independence. Glass dives deeply into this complex relationship, made even more complicated by the shocking ending. That she offers no easy explanations is to her credit.

ELVIS SWIFT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Ancient Shore: Dispatches From Naples
Shirley Hazzard
CHICAGO

This book collects Shirley Hazzard's and Francis Steegmuller's love letters to Naples from a singular time (the postwar decades) and place (a city of surpassing beauty, danger, and cultural complexity). As the professionally expatriate Hazzard notes, "One does not go [to Italy] for simplicity but for interest: to make the adventure of existence more vivid, more poignant." It's a fair assessment, as is her pithy summation of life there as "a performance—an idea of the self played out with style." Both notions are manifested repeatedly—and limned gorgeously—by her painterly prose, her late husband's stylish reportage, and a somewhat unexpected (but thoroughly apt) complement: glowing photographs of Naples by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Herbert List, and others.

Westward the Course of Empire
Mark Ruwedel
YALE

A veteran photographer of the American West, Ruwedel here takes as his abstruse but evocative subject the additions to the landscape made by the great expanding U.S. and Canadian railroads of the 19th and 20th centuries. The cuts and grades, tunnels and trestles that mark the terrain in these starkly beautiful photographs seem like the North American equivalent of ruined Greek temples and Roman viaducts. For ruins many now are, testament to a burst of once-triumphant engineering swept aside by highways. Yet they seem oddly natural, such is the topography's power to subsume human attempts to scratch away at something so grand and forbidding.

American Son: My Story
Oscar De La Hoya
HARPER

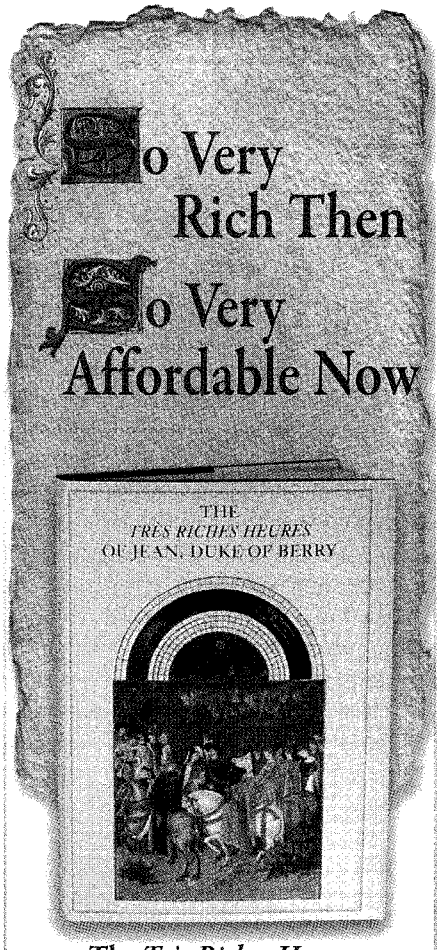
The boxer takes us from the ring to his mother's bedside as she dies of cancer, from his sense of ethnic identity to relationships with business associates, lovers, parents, wife, and children. Truly the golden boy both in and out of the ring, he has successfully invested in media, entertainment, and resorts, becoming an entrepreneurial powerhouse of commerce and charitable giving. Although De La Hoya is honest about his lapses in judgment along the way, his story is mostly about the judicious choices he has made at every stage of his life, shaping his phenomenal trajectory.

Gerard Manley Hopkins
Paul Mariani
VIKING

Few English poets can match Gerard Manley Hopkins for passionate expression of feeling and for inventiveness of form and language. Even fewer have his gift for distilling intense joy and religious feelings into luminous verse. A convert to Roman Catholicism, Hopkins eventually became a Jesuit priest. In Mariani, a poet and accomplished biographer of poets, the Victorian master has found his ideal biographer. The author's profoundly empathetic understanding of his subject's life and work—and of the milieus, secular and cloistered, in which he struggled to flourish—is apparent on every page of this exemplary work.

The Invention of Scotland
Hugh Trevor-Roper
YALE

Irritated by the rise of Scottish nationalism in the 1970s, Trevor-Roper turned his considerable forensic skills to deconstructing what he saw as the endlessly shifting and self-perpetuating myths underpinning this resurgence. The result of more than a decade of thought and research, this book, written with his customary brio, demolishes what to him was a mendacious, pointless, and destructive enterprise. Trevor-Roper serves up devastating tidbits to buttress his arguments: the tartan, far from being an ancient Highland institution, became popular after the union with England and was essentially a reactionary manifestation. But the real pleasure of this posthumous effusion is the sheer joy the author evinces in showing off generous measures of tendentiousness and his undoubted historiographical bona fides.



The *Très Riches Heures* of Jean, Duke of Berry
Item Code: 82550
List Price $~~$125.00~~
Our Price $49.98

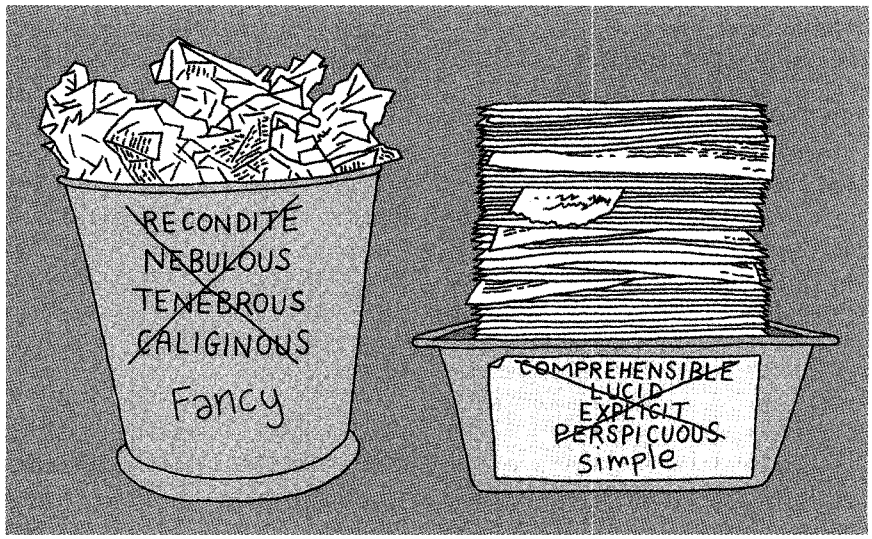
Illuminating deals
Save up to 90% off list price on thousands of books, CDs, & DVDs.

Daedalus Books & Music
The Best Browse in Bargain Books, CDs, and DVDs
Order today!
Call 1-800-395-2665
or go to
salebooks.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN A WORD

By Barbara Wallraff



LAST JUNE, the *Los Angeles Times* published a complaint from a reader named Grant Nemirow about all the obscure words that had appeared in a single article, a profile of director M. Night Shyamalan: *phantasmagoria, bucolic, aesthetic, soupçon, diminution, schadenfreude, contretemps,* and *vicissitudes*. "Ask people if they know what these words mean," Nemirow wrote. "They don't." Other *Times* readers all but hooted Nemirow down.

But maybe he was right? (If so, *The Atlantic*'s editors will be interested: in the past few years, the magazine has published everything on his list.) One of few available assessment tools is the Web site wordcount.org, an "interactive presentation of the 86,800 most frequently used English words," derived from the British National Corpus. (An American equivalent remains a work in progress.) The corpus consists of speech and text, from diverse sources, running to 100 million words. These can be sorted so as to find the words that get the most use. No. 1, by a wide margin, is *the*. No. 86,800 is *conquistador*.

If we believe the linguist David Crystal (and we should), an average college graduate is familiar with about 75,000 words. Not all graduates have identical vocabularies, so the list of 86,800 is probably a good cutoff point for words we can assume reasonably well-educated people know. Nemirow's *vicissitudes* shows up at No. 34,121, *contretemps* at 81,041, and *phantasmagoria* not at all.

The major political speeches in this election year might be good data on which to try out our theory of the 86,800, because they are meant to reach everybody. Barack Obama is considered a brilliant speaker by fans and detractors alike, and he's a wizard at connecting with young people. How complicated does his language get?

Unsurprisingly, none of Nemirow's bêtes noires (excuse me—no-nos) appear in transcripts of a dozen of Obama's recent speeches. And just three words in his August nomination-acceptance speech fail to make WordCount's cut: *retool, outsourced,* and *naysayers*. As for McCain, the outliers in his acceptance speech were *rancor, demoralize,* and *unluckier*.

Oscar Wilde, of all people, once wrote, "It is perhaps a dangerous thing for a country to be too eloquent." William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White put it differently. In their classic *Elements of Style*, they advise, "Avoid fancy words."

WORD FUGITIVES

FANCY WORDS are more than welcome in our long-standing feature Word Fugitives. One linguistic invention recently requested was for "the aversion of many persons (young or old) to revealing their true age."

A dismaying number of readers didn't even try to be charitable. Samuel E. Front, of Hammond, Ind., wanted to call the folks in question *egostatistical* and *calculating*. Gregory Maguire, of Concord, Mass., proposed *chronic liars*.

The older crowd came in for particular abuse. Jim Wexler, of Sandyston, N.J., wrote, "These aging deniers don't want to be *eldercountable*." Laura Daigen-Ayala, of New York City, wrote, "While some people go under the knife to appear younger, these folks merely commit *cosmetic perjury*."

But we wanted a word for the tendency—the aversion. Michael K. Johnson, of Apex, N.C., takes top honors for his fancy but refreshingly nonjudgmental coinage *annumadversion*.

Now JOANNA CARR, of London, writes, "I often wish I had a word (to mutter under my breath) for people with absolutely no horse sense when using public transport or in crowds. You know, the ones who get off the top of the escalator and stop dead, people who swerve into your path, people who walk four abreast. Surely a good descriptive noun is long overdue in busy cities everywhere?"

Visit Barbara Wallraff's new blog, at barbarawallraff.theatlantic.com, for more commentary on language and to submit Word Fugitive queries and suggestions. Readers whose queries are published and those who take top honors will receive an autographed copy of Wallraff's most recent book, Word Fugitives.

PETER ARKLE

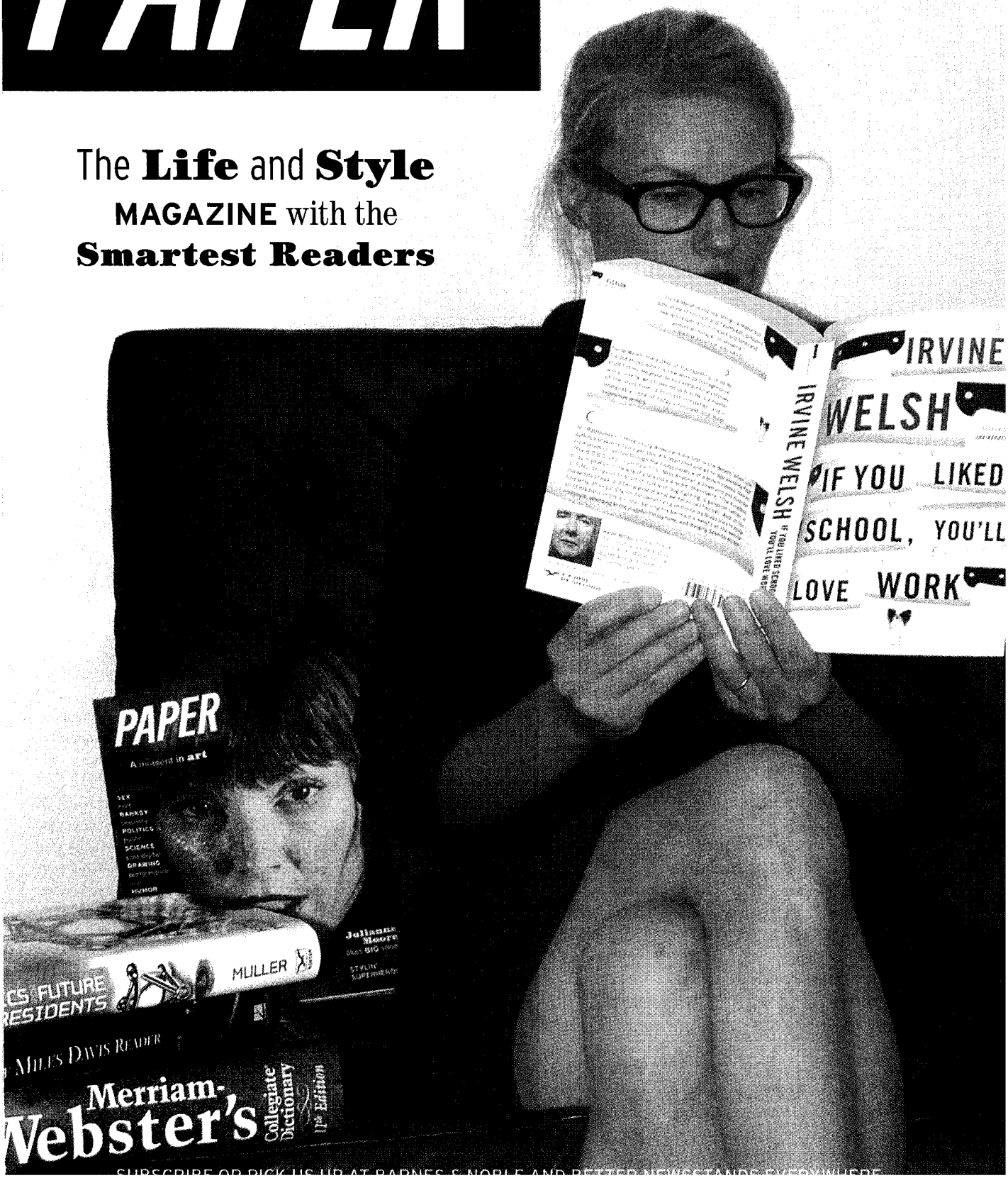
The Atlantic Monthly (ISSN 1072-7825) is published monthly except for combined issues in January/February and July/August by The Atlantic Monthly Group, 600 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20037 (202-266-6000). Periodicals postage paid at Boston, Mass., Toronto, Ont., and additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription queries: Atlantic Customer Care, Box 37585, Boone, IA 50037-0585 (or call 800-234-2411). Privacy: We make portions of our customer list available to carefully screened companies that offer products and services we believe you may enjoy. If you do not want to receive this information, please write to the Customer Care address above. Advertising (212-284-7647) and Circulation (202-266-7017): 600 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20037. Subscriptions: one year $39.95 in the U.S. and poss., add $8.00 in Canada, includes GST (123209926); add $15.00 elsewhere. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement 41385014. Canada return address: *The Atlantic*, P.O. Box 1051, Fort Erie, ON L2A 6C7. Back issues: send $7.50 per copy to *The Atlantic*, Back Issues, 1900 Industrial Park Dr., Federalsburg, MD 21632 (or call 410-754-8219). Vol. 302, No. 4, November 2008. Copyright © 2008, by The Atlantic Monthly Group. All rights reserved. Postmaster: Send address changes to Atlantic Address Change, Box 37585, Boone, IA 50037-0585.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PAPER

Visit us online at
papermag.com

The **Life** and **Style**
MAGAZINE with the
Smartest Readers



SUBSCRIBE OR PICK US UP AT BARNES & NOBLE AND BETTER NEWSSTANDS EVERYWHERE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

By Jeffrey Goldberg

I AM THE EDITOR of a 151-year-old American magazine. We are redesigning our publication in order to make it even more delightful and scintillating. But I'm stymied by our back page. It is important real estate, a place where readers expect to be enlightened and entertained. But I don't know how best to fill it. Do you have any ideas for me?

Name Withheld
Washington, D.C.

Dear James,
I would suggest holding a cartoon-caption-writing contest.

I am 53 and have decided to chuck 30 years in the garment industry to become a high-school history teacher. Is one ever too old to make such a career change? What can a late-middle-aged rookie teacher expect?

Peter Hoelter
Los Angeles, California

Dear Peter,
Fifty-three is a fine age to make a change. Fifty-four is too late. One thing you should know: students today have a great deal of knowledge. This knowledge is wrong, because it comes from Wikipedia, but they know more wrong things than you did in high school. A word of caution: because of texting and cell-phone cameras, you will have no time at all to set your reputation. Before you finish teaching your first class, every student will know whether you are, to borrow a word the kids today may or may not use, a tool. Avoid this by remembering one thing: you are not their friend, you are their teacher. A little distance can produce great authority.

What does the existence of dark matter say about humanity's place in the universe?

Nancy V. Lagana
British Columbia

Dear Nancy,
This is a cosmologically momentous question. A more manageable question is, how much dark matter do you carry around within you? And, how can you best foist that dark matter onto someone else? Dark matter, the presence of which is assumed by physicists because of the discrepancy between a galaxy's gravitational effect and visible matter, should not be a worry. Antimatter, on the other hand, should. Antimatter particles—the doppelgängers of electrons and protons—annihilate themselves and their material "twins" upon contact. An antimatter meteorite might have been responsible for the Tunguska event, an explosion in 1908 that destroyed half a million acres of Siberian tundra. Antimatter sits atop the list of this column's current concerns, along with salmonella-infested jalapenos and Vladimir Putin.

How long will it take for the convergence of television and computers to occur in a practical, in-the-home sense? I am reluctant to buy a new TV until I have a better idea of when this will happen.

Jane Ann Williams
New Paltz, New York

Dear Jane Ann,
In "The Transcendentalist," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "As thinkers, mankind have ever divided into two sects, Materialists and Idealists ... The materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances, and the animal wants of man; the idealist on the power of Thought and of Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture."

But if you still want a big-screen plasma television, you will probably have at least three years, if not five, before a kitted-out digital living room becomes workable, and affordable.

This advice column is a bad idea. If I want advice I'll ask a friend, or go online. Are you going to join in the trivializing of the media? Will horoscopes be far behind? You are watering down your brand!

Mildred Krebs
Russellville, Kentucky

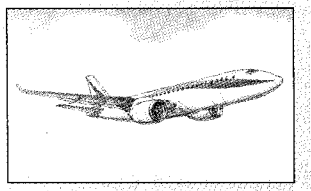
Dear Mildred,
Please don't worry. It's not as if we'd put a photograph of Britney Spears on the cover. ■

To submit your question or request for advice, please e-mail advice@theatlantic.com. Include your full name and address.

JASON FORD/HEART AGENCY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pratt & Whitney
PurePower™ PW1000G Engine



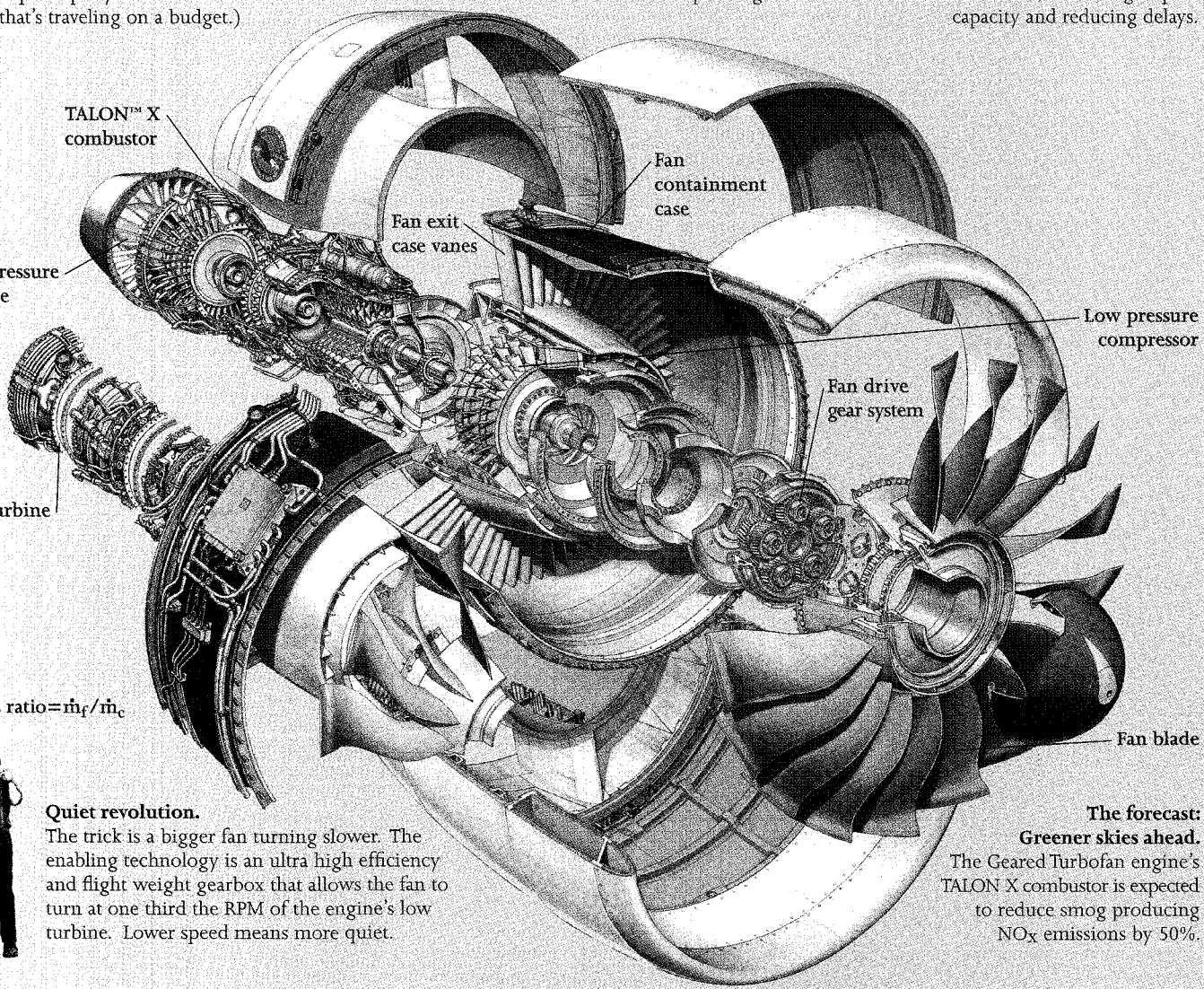
One powerful package.
The Geared Turbofan™ engine is the only engine under development for the next generation commercial aircraft market that is flying today and is expected to deliver double digit reductions in fuel burn and operating costs as soon as 2013.

Now flying.
The PurePower PW1000G engine, you know it as the Geared Turbofan engine, successfully completed its first flights on July 11, 2008. It completed two test flights on Pratt & Whitney's 747SP flying test bed at the company's flight test facility in Plattsburgh, N.Y.

Double digit reduction in fuel burn
+ double digit reduction in maintenance costs
+ reduced or no noise fees
+ reduced or no emissions fees
= potential savings of 1.5 million dollars per airplane per year.
(Now that's traveling on a budget.)

The turbofan diet.
The Geared Turbofan engine has 40% fewer airfoils than existing engines. Which reduces the engine's weight by 10% and maintenance costs by more to lower significantly airline operating costs.

An effective decongestant.
With much quieter engines, airlines could have more flexibility on when they land and take off and fly overhead rather than around the block, increasing airport capacity and reducing delays.



Quiet revolution.
The trick is a bigger fan turning slower. The enabling technology is an ultra high efficiency and flight weight gearbox that allows the fan to turn at one third the RPM of the engine's low turbine. Lower speed means more quiet.

The forecast: Greener skies ahead.
The Geared Turbofan engine's TALON X combustor is expected to reduce smog producing NO_X emissions by 50%.

SO QUIET IT'S GOT BOTH AIRLINES AND INVESTORS LISTENING.

When you create a jet engine that's 50% quieter than the present standard, airlines and investors take notice. United Technologies is no stranger to quiet innovation. Our Otis Gen2® elevator is quieter than conversational speech, while our fuel cell powered bus is as quiet as a luxury sedan. We've also kept the noise down while our earnings per share have compounded at 15% annually for the decade ending 2007, which ranks within the top quartile for the Dow Industrials.℠ Learn more at utc.com/curious.

United Technologies
You can see everything from here.

CARRIER | HAMILTON SUNDSTRAND | OTIS | PRATT & WHITNEY | SIKORSKY | UTC FIRE & SECURITY | UTC POWER | NYSE: UTX

UTC's past performance provides no assurance of future performance. Future performance may vary materially from prior periods due to a number of risk factors, including those described in UTC's 10-K, 10-Q and 8-K reports submitted to the SEC periodically.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"A woman's work is never done."

THAT'S WHAT MANY WOMEN FIND OUT WHEN THEY WANT TO RETIRE.

The number of women over 65 who are still working has increased by more than a third in the past ten years. Why are retirement-age women increasingly chained to their jobs?

Well, women live longer than men, so their retirement savings have to stretch farther. Women earn less – 77¢ for every dollar a man earns – so they save less. And they work fewer years – the average woman spends 11 years out of the workforce caring for children or elderly parents.

How can we help women find a way to retire when they want to? **Allstate has some thoughts:**

1. MAKE EVERY EARNING YEAR COUNT.
Right now, only 47% of working women participate in a company retirement plan. American businesses can do much more to help that number grow. 401(k) programs – such as company matches and automatic enrollment – as well as encouraging participation by part-time workers, are all proven ways to help build savings.

2. EDUCATE WITH FINANCIAL SEMINARS.
Knowledge is power: 53% of women who have a retirement plan said they would increase their annual contributions after they attended a financial education seminar at work.

3. PROMOTE SPOUSAL IRAs.
Non-working women can invest up to $5,000 per year to grow tax-deferred in a Spousal IRA, as long as there is a spouse in the workforce.

These ideas can help women work longer, not because they have to, but because they want to. **You can learn more about this issue and join in the debate at www.WSJ.RetirementDebate.com.**

Let's save retirement by saving for retirement.
THAT'S ALLSTATE'S STAND

Allstate®
You're in good hands.

Auto
Home
Life
Retirement

The Cupped Hands logo is a registered service mark and "That's Allstate's Stand" is a service mark of Allstate Insurance Company. Allstate Life Insurance Company, Northbrook, IL. Lincoln Benefit Life Company, Lincoln, NE. In New York, Allstate Life Insurance Company of New York, Hauppauge, NY. © 2008 Allstate Insurance Company

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED